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A SURVEY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE
1780-1830

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BY

OLIVER ELTON, D.LITT., LL.D.

1780-1830, 2 Vols., 32/- net.
1830-1880, 2 Vols., 32/- net.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

1780-1830

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1924

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TO THE MEMORY
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PREFACE

This work has been termed a survey and not a history, though it contains matter for the historian, and his point of view has been kept in mind throughout in the arrangement of the theme. But the historical aspect is meant to be subordinate ; and the book is really a review, a direct criticism, of everything I can find in the literature of fifty years that speaks to me with any sound of living voice. As the motto on the title-page may indicate, it is a series of judgments upon works of art. I do not know what literature is unless it is an art. Life and ideas, society and manners, politics and affairs, must always be studied in order to understand that art and to judge of its productions. But on each of these productions our last word must be an answer to the questions, Is it well done ? Does it last ? What is it to me ? Even the further question, How does it arise ? is less ultimate and imperative. It is of course equally right and needful to study literature for the light which it may cast upon other things—upon thought or ethics or national character ; but that is a different enterprise, not to be confounded with the present one, although the material may often be the same in the two cases.

The summaries and studies of tendency which will be found in the first and last chapters and elsewhere may seem to stray from the programme here laid down, and have been included with some hesitation. They are sketches, often simple headings ; and it would have taken a book as long again, and also a whole band of specialist writers, to do them justice. The influence of foreign literatures on England, and of Byron and Scott abroad ; the material conditions of authorship, and the effects of the periodical press upon the craft ; the records of scholarship, and the evolution of philosophy as it is mirrored in letters ;—many of these topics still await a concerted attack, though much has been done already to map them out. Indeed, the books and studies in which

the historical aspect of the 'romantic period' is prominent are so many and so good, that I have not pretended to do their work again, and am by no means anxious to enter into competition. I owe them a debt which, like the aid of many generous friends, colleagues, and correspondents, is most imperfectly acknowledged in the notes.

One or two more special obligations should be mentioned here. Professor George Saintsbury, D.Litt., has most kindly read the proof sheets, and offered many valuable suggestions; he has made, as would be expected, handsome allowance for any differences in our critical views, and has encouraged this somewhat lengthy enterprise. Dr. John Sampson has helped me without stint in many ways, by commentary and counsel. Two very close students of Blake, Mr. D. J. Sloss, M.A., and Mr. John P. R. Wallis, M.A., have given advice of much value for the text of the fifth chapter. The good offices of several Slavonic and other scholars are named in vol. ii., p. 420. Mr. G. S. Veitch, B.A., freely placed at my disposal many memoranda on the pamphlets of the time of Burke. Two workers in our University Library have bestowed much time and labour: the great bulk of the Index has been made by Miss Eileen Kelly; and Miss Dorothy Allmand has checked a very large number of references and quotations in the notes. For any errors that remain, and for the whole work as it stands, the author alone is accountable.

Most of the pages on Crabbe are reprinted from *Blackwood's Magazine*, and some of the observations on Coleridge are from the *Modern Language Review*, by the courtesy of the proprietors of those journals. The chief librarian and staff of the Picton Library in Liverpool were good enough to make access easy in every way to their shelves, which are specially rich in the literature of the period; and I am also obliged to the authorities of the Free Reference Library in Manchester, for leave to inspect the Alexander Ireland Collection.

O. E.

Liverpool, *September* 1912.

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CHAPTER I

ANTICIPATIONS

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I

THE reviewer of the romantic period must begin by calling for justice to the age of reason; he must, for his own sake, be fair to the first three quarters of the eighteenth century. We have not the privilege of Blake and Wordsworth and Keats, who

were rebels and liberators, and whose business it was to be ungrateful. We are likely to think too little rather than too much of the writers who are termed classical, and who have long ceased to be dangerous. No doubt Addison and Fielding, Goldsmith and Hume, leave us no central or ultimate standard for the art of prose ; but a just and a sound standard they do leave us. No doubt Dryden, Pope, and their followers leave us a flawed and inadmissible standard for the art of verse, nor does Gray leave us an impeccable one. But in their own kinds, where they succeed, all these writers, whether of prose or verse, are still masters ; they are touchstones of style and composition. We must keep our classical literature firmly in mind and respect it, whilst approaching its successor. It will often help us not a little, and save some vapouring, to compare the new dynasty with the old. We shall appreciate both more distinctly. It is good, for example, to turn back from Carlyle, with his caldron of wasteful words, and to take a course of Hume and Gibbon. We may lose in this way some illusions about Carlyle ; we shall never again fancy that he is a clear thinker or a great constructive artist. But we shall also come to value, as never before, his prodigality of power and depth of spirit ; we shall see, not only that he can sometimes speak like Shakespeare, but that he is *ours*, and that he has formed us all as Hume or Gibbon can never form us. It may also be well, when we encounter a man of crazed and wasted tragic gift, such as Thomas Lovell Beddoes, to imagine him figuring in the *Lives of the Poets*, and to think what crabbed, undeniable things Johnson would have said against him ; that will save us from any fantastic or blown-up estimate ; and then we may remember how Johnson would have missed the whole essence, the lyric rarity, of Beddoes, just as he missed the whole essence of Donne. Or if we set one of the more shapeless volumes of Scott or Dickens beside *Tom Jones*, or Shelley's satires beside the *Epistle to Augustus*, we see at once what has been lost. The glories and advantages of the writers who came after 1780 are so great, that we can afford to acknowledge their defeats. It is of still more moment to remember what they actually inherit from their predecessors.

To cast this account with any approach to fulness is for the historians of English thought. The chronicler of letters, by the nature of his task, can only mention some stray items. He has to cross himself religiously every time that he goes outside the boundaries of art, and to hasten back with all speed. This task, in one respect, is simpler in the age of Wordsworth

and Lamb than in that of Locke or of Adam Smith, because the record of thoughts and that of letters are more closely inter-knotted in the earlier period than in the later. The prose masters of the eighteenth century are often primarily philosophers or scholars, concerned with proving or disproving something, or with clearing up the facts of history and society. From 1780 to 1830 this task, with few exceptions, falls to writers of the second or third rate; it is an age of invention and appreciation, not of demonstration. But the spirit of those elders descends into it nevertheless, though the form and voice are changed; and must be tracked and recognised, if we would understand the continuity of literature.

We speak vaguely of the characteristic eighteenth-century spirit and temper; but it can be resolved, on the intellectual side, into three or four elements, or what the Germans call 'moments,' which by no means succeed one another strictly in the order of time, or sweep on without interruption, but which end in making themselves all felt, and are all found in play by the end of the century.

1. The first of these is the impulse of *criticism*. This impulse is European, and Britain takes a full share in it. Criticism is everywhere; it appears in as many shapes as Glaucus; it inhabits every region of letters. It has many memorials; amongst them are Bayle's *Dictionary* (1697-1702), Hume's essays on political theory and religion (1741-2), the *Encyclopédie* (1751-80), Rousseau's *Emile* and *Contrat Social* (1762), the tracts of Lessing on theology and æsthetic. These are voices, often crying in sharp mutual contradiction, of the great enlightenment, or *Aufklärung*, as the process is called by which the mind of Europe turned round upon tradition and came to a terrible explanation with itself. Taken together, these works exhibit a thorough, hostile scrutiny of received opinions in metaphysical, moral, and social science, and in art. The nature of knowledge, the proof of miracles, the laws and sanctions of marriage, the methods of bringing up the next generation, or of teaching languages, the poetry of Donne or of Pope—nothing is allowed to live upon its legend. This is criticism; and here we are concerned with its effect upon the art of letters.

It is too little noted that many forms of art arise from definite intellectual needs, which in themselves are outside the province of art. These soldiers in the war of criticism had to invent artillery. Unknown literary forms were devised, or old ones revived in a fresh guise, in order to embody the new spirit. Among them may be mentioned the dialogues of Berkeley and

Hume, the satiric parables of Voltaire and Marmontel, the philosophic poems of Pope, and the polemical romances of Rousseau. Remoter from the main current of ideas, but still critical in purport, are the moral essays and sketches of Addison, and the dramatic reviews of Lessing. The point for remark is that these kinds of writing outlive their original applications, and are used, when the issues debated are obsolete, for purposes at first undreamed-of. They suffer change on the way, but they can be recognised. Thus the fictions of Beckford, and those of Peacock, inherit some of their shape or spirit from Voltaire's. The papers of Hazlitt are the late flower of the species invented by the authors of *The Spectator*. *Tintern Abbey* would have been different but for some of Pope's deistic verses. Byron's mode of satire is derived from Pope's, but is then transformed, though by no means out of knowledge, into a mode that is freer; and his habit of arguing in bad blank verse comes straight down from the last century, though his ideas are not the same. Landor's personages do not talk much on the origin of mind or the moral sanction, but the mould of the *Imaginary Conversations* came down to him through the English philosophers, and he did not take it direct from the ancients. Nor is it only the moulds that thus continue. The style and accent that are struck out in the heat of battle do not perish on the morrow, but are preserved for other war-cries. So Macaulay's invective often echoes and out-clamours that of Junius; and many a fighting page of Huxley, or of Newman, is cast in good eighteenth-century form, for which Swift or William Law may be at last responsible. And just as the forms that are born of the spirit of criticism may be used for new ideas, so the ideas that are born of that spirit may pass into other forms. In this way the formulæ of Godwin's prose are taken over into *Prometheus Unbound*, and lose their pallor and flame into life. The emotions and thoughts of Rousseau, after they have created his lyrical and piercing prose, are appropriated by the poets, and colour *Childe Harold*. Thus the effects, direct and other, of the critical spirit take their place amongst the great array of influences—those of antiquity, of the Middle Ages, of modern Germany, or of the Elizabethans, which, after 1800, are all found shaping English literature.

2. But to name Rousseau or Lessing is to have passed already out of the region of pure criticism. Reason cannot unbuild for ever, and after a writer like Hume, with his destructive analysis, has come and gone, reason is still left with a mass of concrete material to reckon with and set in order. This is the

stuff of *learning and science*, in the *reconstruction* of which is found the second ruling impulse of the time. In the third quarter of the century this impulse is most powerfully at work. It is no longer the old, pre-critical learning of Sir Thomas Browne or Joseph Glanvill, but sifted learning, which has been submitted to a new calculus, taught to it by the physical sciences, which have been quietly developing ever since the Renaissance. To trace the conquests of this spirit is for the historian of knowledge. But its effect is felt in pure literature, which has diverse points of contact with learning. One such is found in a work like Lowth's *Praelectiones* on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, which received an English dress nearly half a century (1787) after their delivery; another in Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774-81); a third in the notes on mediæval and other lore made by Gray. These are landmarks in the progress of poetry, which was nourished by the rediscovery of its own past. But the weighty monuments of prose in the third quarter of the century are not brick-heaps of learning; the architect has been at work. There had been nothing like them in England before. The marshalling of the material, processional, imperial past in the *Decline and Fall*; and of the past, in its continuity of institution and sentiment with the present, in Burke's American and Indian speeches; of the solid, inherited facts of the present, in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776); of the facts of biography, ordered and quickened, in the *Lives of the Poets* and in Boswell's *Johnson*; all this is Roman work, and made to stand. So much information and hard thinking tells on the poets, novelists, and fantasts of the next age, and not only on its historians and economists. The ideas of Burke live anew in Wordsworth and Coleridge; Gibbon's pageants inspire De Quincey's *Revolt of the Tartars*; Scott is a historian and a romancer at once. The prose of one period, with its big positive achievements, the fruit of organised learning, touches the imagination of the next.

3. But in that prose the *imagination* is at work already; it is there in the *Decline and Fall*, and in Burke, in the service of knowledge; it is the master-builder. Here it approaches the faculty of the poet, with the difference that its material is limited by the facts; while in the biographers it appears simply as accurate insight or the sense of composition, and in Adam Smith as clearness of scientific grouping and power of generalising. We are not surprised that poetry and fiction should be on the eve of a revival, which indeed has already begun. The 'shaping spirit of imagination,' after a long pause, is recovering

its higher uses. The path was cleared for it, during the classical age, by the work of pure criticism done in its absence. Criticism, learning, reconstruction—to these three notes of the eighteenth century is now added a fourth, that of the imagination; it has come back, and soon it dominates our literature.

These four elements do not appear in neat succession, like the points of a lecture; the mind of a nation does not work in that way. It takes a step onward, then another back, then seems to lie still, then spurts forward again, as Pascal says, *plus que jamais*. Sometimes the imagination is seen at play, only to be chilled by a resurgence of pure criticism. Thus Berkeley precedes Hume, and the fire of Rousseau is quenched in the English utilitarians, who are his debtors. Perhaps it is only in Goethe that the scientific and the inventive faculties are found all in harmony. Still, our 'romantic' literature, if we stand well back from it, is seen to enter into its full heritage. It has a strong vein of criticism and scepticism; it has, in the novel, a powerful hold on real life and on the past; it has, at any rate, the desire for large constructions and imaginative wholes. This unity of mental impulse is by no means the same thing as unity of opinion. The new age is full of intellectual disharmonies, such as that between Wordsworth and Shelley. There is no orchestra in romanticism: it is a tree with many branches, from which are heard many songs by no means in accord. But for all that, the dead century is justified of its works, in its successor; there is no sudden or complete break.

II

In art, the chief difference is seen in the changed relationship of prose to poetry. From 1700 to 1780, the performance is far greater in prose, and the reigning schools of verse do the work of prose, and so the performance in verse is inferior and secondary. From 1780 to 1830 poetry is in the ascendant, and nearly all the best prose is creative, and is doing the work of poetry. The imagination is working freely, and not, as it must in history or sociology, under the restrictions of fact. The historians and philosophers are, as writers, of the second or third rank, until the appearance of Carlyle. This *reunion of poetry and prose under the rule of the free imagination* is the great mark of our literature from 1780 to 1830. After all their delays, and recessions, and conflicts, the forces of criticism, knowledge, and reconstruction begin to unite; and the free imagination unites

them. This fact becomes clear, not only to academic philosophers like Dugald Stewart, but to the poets themselves; the rights of the imagination are first proclaimed by Blake (see Ch. v.) *sub specie aeternitatis*, and later its function is discerned and analysed by Coleridge (Ch. xvi.).

The best prose of the time, as the sequel will show, is innocent of purpose, in the sense that it does not exist in order to teach or persuade, or to alter opinion or behaviour, but to reveal; and is content to be judged by the pleasure that it gives through its own perfection. In Sidney's words, it 'nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth.' *St. Ronan's Well*, and *Dream-Children*, and *The Daughter of Lebanon*, are equally disinterested. Literary criticism, it is true, is partly concerned with establishing theoretic principle, and thus has its purpose; but it is oftener, as in Lamb, a species of creative writing, concerned with making us see, and not with arguing us into admiration. In Coleridge the two purposes are intermixed; but Coleridge is most himself when he works intuitively, and not by demonstration; and, powerfully as he stimulated thought, he did not do enough to redress the balance or to make England a philosophic country; for his great system went bankrupt on his hands.

It may be said that this distinction between the presence and absence of 'purpose,' in the sense defined, breaks down when applied to poetry itself, and that the poetic imagination may work perfectly on behalf of such a purpose. Was not Blake a fighting poet, and did not Wordsworth say he was 'a teacher or nothing'? *The Everlasting Gospel*, and *The Prelude*, and *Adonais*, are poems of doctrine. The doctrinal aim is heard even in Keats, and overarches the lyric dream in which Shelley lived, and presses incessantly on Wordsworth. Few of the greater poets are quite free from it. All this is true; and such a purpose is another legacy from the past century. A further distinction must therefore be made.

There seem to be three kinds of poetic effort, shading off one into the other. There is the writing that is not begotten by the wish to enforce a view, and is content to be very good; which hardly plays with anything that can be called an idea, even to clothe it in Sinai raiment, or to make it the servant of art. Even in the classical age there is a little of this kind; it is present in a few pages of Collins or Thomson, and in some of Macpherson's prose. After 1780 there is much more of it; there are *Songs of Innocence*, and the lyrics of Burns. After 1800 there is still more. Of *Christabel*, of most of the verse of

Keats, you cannot ask whether it is true or false ; or of the ending of *Brougham Castle.* But there is a second kind of poetry, whose aim is doctrine, and which is none the worse for that. A poetic idea is handled in such a way that a proposition is involved. Lucretius, and that not only in his scholastic passages, raises the greatest questions with a certain directness ; and so does Hamlet, who does not simply play with such questions, but who wants an answer to them, though he may not get it. *Prometheus Unbound* enforces Shelley's tenets ; so does the *Ode to Duty* ; there is a conviction behind them. There is a great deal of such poetry in the romantic period ; it may be inspired by Greek, or revolutionary, or German philosophy. It will not do to say that the poetry is good in so far as it escapes from its purpose, and weak in so far as it propounds ; for this is notoriously not true ; although it is true that the poetry is weak in so far as it merely declaims. But there is a third kind, where the poem would have been different if questions had not been asked and answered, but where they are not asked or answered in the poem. Ideas, in Coleridge's phrase, medicate the poetic atmosphere. Neglecting the dubious cases, we have such a treatment when Wordsworth describes the pressure of the hills upon his soul as he skated along Esthwaite Lake, or calls London 'the chronicle at once and burying-place of passions' ; or when, to Keats as he muses, 'Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.' This poetry may not be better than the second kind, but it is not exposed to the same risks ; for it cannot be contradicted, and it is independent of all changes of thought. The romantic period is rich in it.

All these species are equally good, if the work is equally well done, and in all it can be well done. Art may or may not be for art's sake, if only it is art. It must work under the law of beauty, even if it is not deliberately made for that end ; or it is cast into the oven. No good intentions—ethical, intellectual, or other—can either save or damn it. Above all, no artistic good intentions, if not realised, can save it. Its aim and theme may be anything that will admit of its working under the law. What aims and themes really admit of that obedience, or have ensured it, can only be judged by the event, that is, by the execution. This is not a novel view ; but it may be stated once for all, at the risk of the obvious, and with the reader's leave, as that obtaining in the present survey :

> A modest creed, and yet
> Pleasant, if one considers it.

III

The ten years before the French Revolution saw the ending of a great period of English prose, and the beginning of a new period of English verse. The work of Johnson, Gibbon, and Reynolds was now being finished; that of Adam Smith had appeared earlier; Burke's was more than half done, and it is only his last seventeen years that directly concern us. He alone supports the great traditions of prose, and is active almost to the end of the century. The new bent that prose was to receive after 1800 is foreseen in the novelists who come between Sterne and Scott. It contains some anticipations of coloured and impassioned writing. In verse, the year 1780 marks a true revival. The decade of the sixties, with Percy, Macpherson, Chatterton, and *The Deserted Village* (1770), had seen a false dawn of romance, but this was not soon to 'ripen into a steady morning.' The chief poem of the next ten years, Beattie's *Minstrel* (1771 and 1774), marks little advance in power, despite its gleams of vision and pleasant, half-playful echo of Spenser's cadence. But amidst its elegant triteness there is a new poetic idea, expressed in the title. The minstrel is an 'itinerant poet and musician,' born in a 'rude age,' thoroughly 'Gothic' in his bearing, and bearing 'a character not only respectable but sacred.' This idea was captured by Chateaubriand, and faintly prophesies Scott's *Lay*. But it does not touch the four poets who next arise. *The Village* and *Poetical Sketches*, *The Task* and the Kilmarnock *Poems*, all come forth between 1782 and 1787; so that these years are an acknowledged era in the growth of 'romanticism.' That term, of course, only came into use much later, by way of retrospect. The word 'romantic' is much older, and some of its meanings, on the lips of the writers after 1780, will be noticed. The modern definitions of it cannot be counted; and instead of trying to add another, it is better to begin with facts than with names, and to ask, What is the general change that steals over the English imagination during the eighteenth century? Many causes for the change will appear—the interest in the past, in the older English poets, in the classics, in foreign letters, in nature; but what, in fact, is the change itself?

It can be stated as the convalescence of the feeling for beauty. Not 'strangeness in beauty,' and not 'the sense of wonder'; these terms cover too little, and are only varieties of something more fundamental—the feeling for beauty itself. The years from 1780 to 1830 differ from the years 1730 to 1780

in the swifter recognition of the ailment, in the assured convalescence, in the completed cure.

The feeling for beauty is restored; beauty becomes again the object of the imagination; and this feeling is enriched from three separate but meeting sources. First of all, the *senses of the artist are regenerated*; this is at the bottom of everything. Secondly, his renewed perceptions of the face of living nature are attended by a *vision of humanity*, a new passion and humour, the expression of which is brought under the law of beauty. Thirdly, this new knowledge and self-knowledge are read in the light of *new ideas*; philosophical conceptions and visions invade literary art, and are brought under its law. Great material or mental occurrences, like the Revolution, or the appearance of Napoleon, or the publication of the philosophy of Kant, give in time a formidable substance and reality to this third element. The pathways of hope stretch and brighten before humanity, and the very walls of its despair or impotence rise in blacker strength, as the imagination pictures them. And out of these three elements, the new senses, the new sympathies and passions, and the new ideas, arises a new style, or rather many styles, that strive to catch up with the new material and express it; and each of them aims at its specific beauty. And let no one imagine that we are bound here to say what we mean by beauty in itself; for there is no such thing, or if there be, it is of no consequence to us; there are only infinite manifestations of beauty. Here we follow Goethe, who said to Eckermann, on the 18th of April 1827:

> I cannot help laughing at the æsthetical folks who torment themselves in endeavouring, by some abstract words, to reduce to a conception that inexpressible thing to which we give the name of beauty. Beauty is a primeval phenomenon, which itself never makes its appearance, but the reflection of which is visible in a thousand different utterances of the creative mind, and is as various as nature herself.

Yes, it is so various that even in its lower grades of perfect address, or expressiveness, such as we meet in a page of Cobbett's, or of Jane Austen's, it is perceptible. It includes the 'sublime,' from which the old theorists distinguished it, and the terrible, and the pathetic, and the like, for it is the form and condition under which these qualities operate; it comes to be almost co-extensive, in the sphere of art, with form itself. But beauty, to exist in art at all, must first of

all be perceived in the world; and for this to occur, there must be a regeneration of the poetic senses.

The masters of classical verse—Dryden, Pope, and Swift—had the lively angry senses of the novelist; they had the seeing eye, the thirsty ear, the quick apprehension of manners, and they had little love for what they perceived. But their poetic senses were seldom awake, save in one direction; they had an ear for words, a noble fervour for sound and rhythm, over a limited range. With their rhymed couplets they created a little world of music—ear-shattering sometimes, it is true, rather than what De Quincey called 'heart-shattering' music; oftener the tune of hammer and shuttle and bones than of harp or viol. Beyond this, they seem to have little of the poet's bodily sensibility to beauty, though Pope had his share of it at first; and their shortcoming in such perception is punished by their failure to reach the rarest pitch of language. They cared little for the face of the world. The thinker or orator may get on without caring much for this. But even fiction, however rich in sympathy and knowledge, falls by just so much short of the fulness of life, as it fails to disclose the actual countenance of nature, or of man and woman; while poetry, if it does not do that, banishes itself to the strangest limbo. It follows that the history of our imaginative writing, with its heralding struggles, and hopeful but fatal half-triumphs, and long relapses, and impulses that petrify before they achieve, and its perfect and prophetic things neglected at the time, is, at bottom, very much the history of the artistic senses and their growth, as they urge and shape themselves finally into the words that are, as Longinus says, 'the light of the mind.'

A survey of our poetry, through Thomson and Gray and Collins, through Macpherson's *Ossian* and Smart and Chatterton, through Goldsmith, up to Blake and Burns, might easily thread itself on this one clue, which would be proved a sound one by the event, leading us as it does to two artists of the richest sensitive faculty, each of whom has found a true style for receiving and transmitting without hindrance the physical message of the world. Blake, as a point of doctrine, and in the interests of spiritual vision, disowns the five senses as sources of falsehood, but of course his painting and poetry are rooted in their report: *nihil est quod non prius in sensu.* It would also be just to take one aspect of such a renewed sensibility, the feeling for natural scenery, and for the words that interpret it to the inner eye, as a representative one; and this feeling would be found to vary pretty regularly, though not

uniformly, with the general imaginative power of each poet. One sign of the times, in the last quarter of the century, is its fuller extension among the prose writers. The travel notes of Beckford, or of Mrs. Radcliffe, will furnish illustration (Ch. VII.); but a word may be added here, failing a better place, on two effects of this alertness to natural things, which emerge more clearly about the same period. One is its extension to the living creatures that are a part of nature, and the other is that habit of pictorial vision, somewhat grotesque at times, but real enough, which seeks to utter itself in a theory of the 'picturesque.'

IV

The feeling for the beauty and expressiveness of the animal world, of its sociability with man, and of its value to poet and artist, becomes much enhanced. Blake's treatment, whether indignantly sympathetic, or magnificently symbolic, of the tiger, the emmet, and the lamb, has never been surpassed. Burns's friendly, sentimental, or satiric presentment of the beasts —and with whom he lived, sheep, dogs, and horses—has no such strange light hanging over it; he talks to these creatures, or talks to himself about them, aloud, in their presence, as men do who live much with them. Cowper makes a kind of *vers de société* about his pets or their enemies—a spaniel, or a kitten threatened by a viper. He observes them closely, not as a naturalist, but for the fun and pleasure of the thing. For the true intuition of animal character, and of the beauty or oddness of line in small creatures, we must perhaps leave the poets, and turn to the engravings of Bewick, whose *Select Fables*, as well as his *Quadrupeds* and his *British Birds*, came out during this period (1784-1804). In Bewick design is faithfully subordinated to observation, and to the scientific spirit; but just those postures and aspects are chosen, which are lovely or humorous as well as cruelly characteristic. His delight in the exact planting of a bird's claw, or the sweep of a squirrel's tail, and his power to *compose* them—often as if within the dimensions of a coin or medallion, attest Bewick's footing on that enchanted if rather narrow ground, which is common to art and to science, and where neither exists merely on sufferance.

Bewick watches, but Gilbert White both watches and listens; one of the most poetic things in *The Natural History of Selborne* [1] (1789) is the notation of the songs and calls of birds and of other natural sounds. White leaves a store of observa-

tions that are, as it were, just ready for Keats or Tennyson to take up; on the 'loud audible humming of bees in the air, though not one insect is to be seen'; on the blackcap, with his 'full, sweet, deep, loud, and wild pipe'; on the echo, which returns better from naked rocks than from 'hanging woods,' because 'in the latter the voice is, as it were, entangled and embarrassed in the covert,' and which succeeds better with 'quick dactyls'—so White observes—than with 'slow, heavy, embarrassed spondees of the same number of syllables.' Once he says:

> When I hear fine music I am haunted with passages therefrom night and day; and especially at first waking; which, by their importunity, give me more uneasiness than pleasure.

The poet of *The Ancient Mariner* read and pencilled the book with delight, and sometimes seems to be speaking himself; as when White tells how

> the sun, at noon, looked blank as a clouded moon, and shed a rust-coloured ferruginous light on the ground, and floors of rooms; but was particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting . . . and indeed there was reason for the most enlightened person to be apprehensive; for, all the while, Calabria, and part of the isle of Sicily, were torn and convulsed with earthquakes.

White, when he speaks of the 'majestic mountains' of Sussex, is in an even more naïve state of mind than Gray among the Lakes. His imaginative touches are exceptional; but they grow, without any break, out of his peaceful, minute, and precise work as the naturalist of his own village. The scientific value of his observations on birds, earthworms, the times of flowering trees, and many other such matters, is acknowledged, and his direct and vivid manner, as he writes his scraps of letter to Pennant or Barrington, raises them, like the letters of Cowper, to the level of literature. Thus in White, also, art and science meet; it is neither the large, abstract, generalising science of the previous age, nor yet the more rigid and technical science of that which was to follow, but a science that studies the face and the life of the earth, finds nature on the whole benevolent and providential, but muses now and then on her curious contradictions, as shown, for instance, in the feeling of animals for their young—their *στοργή*: 'nor is the violence of this affection more wonderful than the shortness of its duration.'

The fresh delight, not unmixed with alarm, but full of a

boyish sense of discovery, which came to Gray in the presence of Alpine and Cumbrian scenery, is well known. It gives a new colour and ripple to his prose, although, when he tries to use the same experience for his verse, as in *The Bard*, he is turbid, and we have no image of what he describes. Gray does not think of a visible scene as a picture, he is content to be the natural man. It was not till later that this selective process, suggested partly by the painters, partly by the craft of landscape gardening, found its formulæ and told on descriptive prose. To writing, indeed, and not to nature or to paintings, the word 'picturesque' seems to have been early, though not first, applied by Warton and Johnson. Dugald Stewart,[1] in his *Philosophical Essays* (1810), traces the derived senses; first, 'those combinations or groups or attitudes of objects, that are fitted for the purposes of the painter'; and next, these elements 'in the improvement of real landscape' which can be suggested by 'the study of painting.' These three senses, blended in varying measure, long attach to the term, and can be traced down to the æsthetic criticism of Hazlitt: nor have such associations disappeared by the date of *Modern Painters*.

Many of these new instincts became evident in the long-popular work by Archibald Alison,[2] *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790), which furnished Dugald Stewart, Jeffrey, and many more with matter for their discussions on the Beautiful and the Sublime. In somewhat formal guise, and in an elegant and amateurish fashion, but with a keen eye for the facts of artistic sensibility, Alison develops his analysis of the complex pleasure, which he calls 'delight,' and which is afforded by the exercise of 'taste.' The ground of this delight he finds in the associative process. The things of sense, in themselves, merely make us glad or sorrowful, or fill us with terror. Then comes the imagination, which works through the 'train of thought' thus set in motion, and carries us beyond our sensations and simple emotions, calling up further memories and ideas; and æsthetic delight depends, and depends solely, on its workings. It might seem that the delight given by a forest filled with the glow of sunset could not be enhanced; but add the sound of evening bells! Then, indeed, is true delight; for the ideas of piety, worship, and the like are superadded, consummate the pleasure; the imagination has done its work. Alison perversely refuses to permit the mere senses to please the 'taste,' and he is hampered by the false traditional distinctions, fixed by Burke, between the 'beautiful' and the 'sublime.' But his analyses of the actual qualities in nature

(the sounds of birds, and the elements, and the human voice, as well as colour and natural form) are remarkably skilful and persistent, and often read like a rude draft of a page of Ruskin. In his pages that renewed feeling for natural beauty, which we have found in literature at large, becomes conscious and introspective, and prepares the way for a deeper self-scrutiny. This renewal, however, is best studied at the time in the theories of the 'picturesque,' an idea which Alison tries to fit in to his theory of artistic sensation.

In 1772 William Gilpin, a country clergyman like White, published *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, written some fifteen years before; the first of many such discourses, of which his *Remarks on Forest Scenery* (1791) is the most methodical. The once-read but wearisome *Tours of Dr. Syntax*, by William Combe, are a whimsical burlesque of Gilpin's wanderings in the Lakes, and the Highlands, and the Wye Valley, and the Welsh Mountains. Gilpin sometimes raises a smile, but he is beyond the reach of such a buffoon. He goes about to 'examine landscape by the laws of picturesque beauty,' and, like painters, he is often disappointed with it. He is blind to the beauty that does not seem to him to be a good composition. He lays down rules and taboos as to what is or is not pictorial. 'Two cows,' we learn, 'will hardly combine,' in paint. It is offensive for a river to enter a foreground at a right angle, but we may plant 'trees to hide the deformity.'

> A straight line at the summit of a wood, except in very remote distances, is familiar, heavy, and disgusting. . . . A regular line at the base of a long line of wood scenery is almost as disgusting.

That is, both the painter and the landscape-gardener may, indeed must, put in the trees. But Gilpin has much better things to say. The laying out of nature so as to please the eye soon becomes his absorbing interest, and the book *On Forest Scenery, illustrated by the Scenery of the New Forest in Hampshire*, is an entertaining mass of observation and precept. The beauty and special physiognomy of oak and spruce and chestnut, the arrangement of clump and glen, of copse and 'open grove,' the effects of water and atmosphere, are treated nicely and systematically. Many of Gilpin's remarks show the alertness of his senses. He feels the value of the English blur, or 'rich distance':

> The calm, overcast, soft day, which these climates often produce at the beginning of autumn, hazy, mild, and undisturbed, affords

a beautiful medium, spreading over the woods a sweet, grey tint, which is specially favourable to their distant appearance.

At another time we are reminded of Cowper's *Yardley Oak*, and hear of the grandeur of ruined trees :

> They record the history of some storm, some blast of lightning, or other great event, which *transfers its great ideas to the landscape* . . . the maladies of trees are greatly subservient to the uses of the pencil.

Sometimes there is a faint forecast of Wordsworth, not only when Gilpin speaks of the ' lengthening gleam of wan dead light ' on Bassenthwaite, but when he adds :

> Every great and pleasing form, which we had seen during the day, now played, in strong imagery, upon the fancy ; as, when the grand chorus ceases, the ideal music vibrates in the ear.

Gilpin is further curious, because on one side he draws on Burke's conception of the sublime, so genuine in its feeling, so crude in its analysis ; and the elements of awe, mystery, strangeness, and terror form part of his notion of the picturesque ; whilst on the other, he leads the way to the ' romantic ' scenery of *Waverley*, insisting on certain arrangements, conventional lights and shades, supposed to be taught by the school of Salvator Rosa, and assuming that they *must* move us, much as Addison held that Milton's Adam and Eve *must* interest us.[1]

A similar temper, in which actual scenery, painting, and poetry are confusedly cultivated together, can be illustrated from the travel notes of a third country parson, Thomas Twining,[2] the gifted translator of the *Poetics* of Aristotle and the friend of Dr. Burney. The attitude is not unlike Gray's, for the writer is fresh ; no man has felt the like before ; the place described is the valley of the Calder, and the date 1781 ; and since the tone is not quite that of any of the new poets who were so soon to speak, the length of the quotation stands excused :

> The valley contracts itself ; the hills crowd about you, rising almost perpendicularly on each side, wooded from top to bottom, with black, craggy rocks peeping out here and there ; *picturesque* little mills, with their rush of water, close under the woods ; bridges, some stone, of a single arch, others of wood, but *all exactly as a painter would have them* ; cottages perched about, some in the road, others close to the stream, in *most romantic and improbable situations*, more like stone nests than houses ; here and there little cross vales

opening into this, paths winding up the woods, craggy roads losing themselves round the corner of a wood, etc., etc.—I sicken with *vague description!* In short, the effect it had on me (and Elmsall too) was that of *painted landscapes of the most invented and poetic kind realised*; and every object, animate or inanimate, that we saw was of a piece with the surrounding scene . . . a man with a pack on his shoulder and a staff in his hand trudging over a rustic bridge, or climbing up a winding path through a wood; men driving pack-horses, or lounging along sideways on the empty packsaddle—*a favourite figure with painters.*[1]

Twining also expresses, unawares, what is called the 'disinterested' character of æsthetic enjoyment; the words were written in 1793, the year of Wordsworth's *Descriptive Sketches*:

This pleasure is something totally *sui generis* to me . . . a serenity, a perfect complacency, a full satisfaction that wants nothing, looks forward to nothing, leaves no wish to be anything or anywhere but what I am and where I am then; all this *mixed with more benevolence* than I can feel perhaps in any other situation. Set me in *a romantic valley*, I could pluck out my eyes and give them to my friend if I could see the prospect without them.

Twining's picture of the vale of Llanrwst is in the same tone; he was a musician, and had a keen, enjoying, critical nature. We can draw, as it were, lines of affinity or contrast between such passages, in one direction to the Spanish notes of Beckford, in another to the fervent descriptions of tourists,[2] in another to the poems of Cowper, in another to the paintings of their contemporary, the elder Crome, in order to see what is meant by the renewal of the artistic senses.

Sir Uvedale Price,[3] whose prolix work *On the Picturesque* (1794) is the most methodical of all these discussions, has little to say of literature, but applies his conception, nearly identical with Gilpin's, to painting, to nature, and to ornamental landscape. The essence of the picturesque, which is midway between the 'beautiful' and the 'sublime,' is the element of 'roughness and abruptness, with sudden deviations.' Thus, a Pomeranian terrier is picturesque, and a smooth spaniel is not. The Venetian painters are picturesque, because their colours are broken and blended; and so is Gothic as contrasted with Grecian architecture, which Price, like Reynolds, describes as consisting of ideal or 'central' forms, 'midway between the extremes of every kind.' But a *ruined* Greek temple is picturesque. How near these notions of the picturesque approach to that of the 'romantic,' as conceived by the

school of Mrs. Radcliffe, and afterwards by Scott's hero, Edward Waverley, may be seen from a passage in which Price describes two landscapes. The first is, by definition, picturesque. There are

> varied and strongly-marked effects of broken ground; of *sudden* projections and deep hollows; of *old* twisted trees with furrowed bark; of water tumbling in a deep worn channel over rocks and *rude* stones, and half lost among *shaggy* roots, *decaying* stumps, and *withered* fern.

The influence of Burke's theory of 'beauty,' as equivalent to delicacy and loveliness and 'smoothness,' is seen in the contrasted picture of

> a glade or small valley of the *softest* turf and finest verdure; the ground on each side swelling *gently* into knolls . . . the whole adorned with trees of the *smoothest and tenderest* bark . . . a *gentle* stream festooned with foliage . . . stones with their surface sometimes varied and *softened* by the rich velvet of mosses, etc.

Through these definitions and distinctions, simple-minded as they may now seem, the artistic senses put themselves to school; and if the theorists lag behind the poets and painters themselves, that is in the nature of things. Sometimes the artist is himself the philosopher; and by Blake and Reynolds, as will appear later, the real questions of æsthetic are asked, and often resolutely answered.

V

Besides this refreshed perception of the visible and audible world, there is a new vision of mankind, and a new vein of passion and humour correspondent. No unreal line need be drawn; the elements are only separate in analysis, and they unfold together:

> And when the mind is quicken'd, out of doubt,
> The organs, though defunct and dead before,
> Break up their drowsy grave, and newly move
> With casted slough and fresh legerity.

And when the 'organs' are quickened, it is incredible that they should not straightway, or in the same act, perceive man and woman anew, and the child, as well as the lamb, and the water-snakes, and the hares, in the same recovered light, and to the same accompaniment of murmuring sound, with which they have begun to perceive the nature that we miscall dead.

And it does prove that the vision of mankind, both as it familiarly is, but had never yet been seen to be; as it may be, or never may be, but as it is good to think that it will be; and of the creatures which, as we now know, stand in the long history somewhere behind humanity, arrested in their way towards it, but leaving in it types and traces of themselves—the gadfly, the butterfly, the good and bad serpent, the lion; it proves that this vision has stolen in, along with an eye for landscape, and with a re-perception of the music of the elements; not indeed, always in the same hour, or in the same minds, yet ever present and re-invading, like an adolescence of the soul.

In seeking to define this change, we must, once more, not do wrong to the less purely imaginative writers. At first we incline to say that the change came through a breach with the spirit of the prosaic, quarrelsome, heavy-footed, unrefined age of reason. And it is easy to think this, if we fix our eyes on the showy, ruthless things written in the old forms, like *The Dunciad*, or Swift's picture of the beings who were indeed immortal but grew horribly older and older; and then upon the visions of Blake and Wordsworth, and on their critical revolt; noticing also Blake's dictum that 'Gothic is living form,' and Wordsworth's attacks upon 'Ossian' and Pope's *Homer*. But long before the philosophic passion for mankind met and deepened, in these authors, the waters of romance, we can trace a larger humanity gaining upon the characteristic eighteenth-century writers, and taking in fresh types and social layers. The humble and the dowdy, the pariahs and eccentrics of the earth, the trader, the seaman, and the bourgeois, could stir the imagination after all. Wesley claimed their souls; Oglethorpe, Howard, and other noble reformers, won them better schools and prisons; Johnson was their helpmate; Fielding with friendly deep irony, and Hogarth with the love that chastises, took their portraits; and Gray thought of them gently when they were dead. De Quincey's tenderness for Ann of Oxford Street, or for 'the convict of Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England,' is in the same lineage of sentiment, exalted and intensified. In all this there was little doctrine. We seldom hear of the rights of the poor, or of their abstract equality with ourselves, or of the value of landscape in their education, or of the hope that some day, under a new heaven, they may be happy and redeemed. Such ideas come more fully to light in the tracts of Paine and Godwin, and with many a

premonitory flash, as of no summer lightning, in the verse of Blake or Burns. The writers of the classical period see men through no such medium.

The eighteenth century, pure and simple, was rich enough in humanity, and so was its characteristic writing, as the examples of Steele, of Fielding, and of Johnson are enough to show. There is nothing better, for heart or for style, than Johnson's last letter to his mother; if by style we mean the heart's choice of the right words, and the care taken that the aged senses of the reader shall not have to think twice over a single syllable.

Dear honoured Mother,—Your weakness afflicts me beyond what I am able to communicate to you. I do not think you unfit to face death, but I know not how to bear the thought of losing you. Endeavour to do all you can for yourself. Eat as much as you can. I pray often for you; do you pray for me. I have nothing to add to my last letter.—I am, dear mother, your dutiful son, Sam. Johnson.

Such men saw life plain, and had nothing to learn, in the simpler kind of great prose expression, from romance; it is romance that is in debt to them. They loved their kind because they had mixed much with it and had kept their heads, and not because they held that they ought to love it. There is none of that excess, or fatal tip-over into wrong sentiment, which was the price paid by romance for its victories, and which often disfigures the pages of Dickens and Thackeray, and even of Charlotte Brontë; persons who, with romance behind them, dealt in eloquence and colour. Do not these writers, so full of genius and passion, frequently and horribly put us off and chill our humanity by some overloaded, ill-written appeal to it, and by emotional false notes? We have not to be on our guard in this way with *Amelia*, or with the character-sketches of William Law. The 'sensibility' of Richardson and Sterne, which is correctly viewed as a new ingredient in our literature, is one of the origins of this excess: the writing of the classical school is not. Well, that noble kind of plainness in the utterance of deep feeling, which is commanded also, with more grace and play, if with less solemnity, by Goldsmith, in his *Vicar of Wakefield*—this is the bequest, it is perhaps the grand bequest, of the classical age to later literature. It is taken up afterwards by the masters of romance. It is heard in the private journals of Scott and of Carlyle when they are alone with their memories of bereavement; or in some pages of *Vanity Fair*; or in the first

untroubled flowings of the talent of George Eliot. There is no break here between two ages; there is a large, plain, unbroken tradition; the language is what our ancestors called the language of the heart. Such an idiom cannot be concocted; and when we say that the gift of finding it is style, we mean by style the removal of anything that can disturb expression, and not something plastered on to, or artificially shaping, expression. In one way it is the absence, in another the crown, of literature. Wordsworth attains to this style when he speaks of

> The memory of what has been
> And never more shall be.

No doubt such effects are the same in all tongues and at all times; but our classical prose lends itself well to them. Swift's memorial to Esther Johnson is another instance; and, very late in the day, we come on a soberer one still, in Walpole's letter to the Miss Berrys, written on 10th October 1790, when he was seventy-three, and these old companions were leaving England:

> If I live to see you again, you will then judge whether I am changed—but a friendship so rational and pure as mine is, and so equal for both, is not likely to have any of the fickleness of youth, when it has none of its other ingredients. It was a sweet consolation to the short time that I may have left, to fall into such a society—no wonder then that I am unhappy at that consolation being abridged. I pique myself on no philosophy but what a long use and knowledge of the world had given me, the philosophy of indifference to most persons and events. I do not pique myself on being ridiculous at this very late period of my life; but when there is not a grain of passion in my affection for you two, and when you both have the good sense not to be displeased at my telling you so (though I hope you would have despised me for the contrary), I am not ashamed to say that your loss is heavy to me.

This, in its way, is not easily beaten by anything that comes after; 'prose and reason' are here justified of their children; and when we also remember the generous vividness with which the four great novelists, headed by Fielding, represented real life, and how they added new types and proverbial figures to the stock of the world—Squire Western, Lovelace, my Uncle Toby—in a fashion that had not been done, save once or twice by Defoe and Addison, since the good days of the drama, we shall not be inclined to do them wrong.

All the same, these writers precede rather than anticipate a real change in the spirit of humanity, a change which every-

body feels, while it is hard to put a name to it because it strikes so deep. It is doubly false to describe it as a change from the spirit of cheerful or self-satisfied optimism to that of 'romantic' melancholy. Why, the melancholy and gloom of the eighteenth century itself were just what struck the youthful Goethe[1]; and not only 'Ossian,' but Swift and Johnson are there to attest it; while, on the other side, the buoyancy of prophetic hope in Blake or Shelley is crossed by a thousand misgivings. It is rather that, as time passes, both sorrow and happiness speak in a different voice; as may be seen at once by comparing extremes, the gloom of *Rasselas* and that of *Childe Harold*, or the good cheer of Fielding with that of Scott. It is trite to say that the passions and emotions are always the same; it is more to the purpose to see how their texture alters. Take the simple expression of innocent pleasure, in a picture of village games. Here is Goldsmith's:

> How often have I blest the coming day,
> When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
> And all the village train, from labour free,
> Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
> While many a pastime circled in the shade,
> The young contending as the old survey'd;
> And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
> And sleights of art and feats of strength went round:
> And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
> Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd.

Blake has another treatment, in *The Echoing Green*:

> Old John, with white hair,
> Does laugh away care,
> Sitting under the oak,
> Among the old folk.
> They laugh at our play,
> And soon they all say,
> Such, such were our joys,
> When we all, girls and boys,
> In our youth time were seen
> On the Echoing Green.
>
> Till the little ones, weary,
> No more can be merry;
> The sun does descend,
> And our sports have an end.
> Round the laps of their mothers
> Many sisters and brothers,
> Like birds in their nest,
> Are ready for rest,
> And sport no more seen
> On the darkening Green.

Blake wrote that less than twenty years after Goldsmith; but he is in a different world. It is not only that he *sees*, and that he works in images, which wreathe themselves in foliage and figure round the margin of his 'song of innocence'; or that his style is pure and right, while Goldsmith's is sweetly conventional; but that the human sentiment is deeper, subtler, and more universal. Indeed, the more we look into Blake, the surer we are that in his union of pure humanity with poetic truth and passion, and in his command of terror and wrath and pity, he is both the earliest among the greater poets, and the greatest among the earlier poets, in whom the changes we describe are apparent. Those who wrote after him in the Lakes, or at Ravenna, or at Great Marlow, were hardly touched by his influence; but, before their time, and on his lips, the conception of love had been raised into a different sphere; the 'renascence of wonder,' by which the love of marvel was transformed into the sense of mystery, had reached one of its summits; and the sense of human brotherhood had found impassioned utterance. Blake's feeling for the infinite was habitual, and the presence of this feeling is the broadest, if necessarily the least definable difference of the new poetry from the best of the old. Its expression, in beautiful form, and in relation to nature and human life, during the fifty years succeeding the *Poetical Sketches*, falls to be noted at various points in the sequel.

VI

Thus comes in sight the third of the sources from which the recovered sense of beauty is enriched; and this is the *movement of philosophic thought*. Man's conception of himself, of his fellows, of his training and destiny, and of the social fabric, is powerfully modified. The chronicle of this movement falls to the student of thought and culture; it is often remote from the chronicle of letters, but the two sometimes coalesce. This happens, either when some monument of philosophic prose is achieved; or when abstract ideas are found telling powerfully, if less methodically, upon the work of the imagination. Between 1780 and 1830 there are no great English philosophers (apart from Burke and Coleridge) who can be called great writers. But how deeply the poets and essayists are penetrated by abstract ideas will appear hereafter. Meanwhile some of the leading forces of this order may be noticed.

1. The most potent single influence is that of Rousseau.

By his passion for nature, both in itself and in its connection with his educational doctrine ; by his exaltation of the natural man, and his treatment of love ; and, above all, by the immense extension that he gave to the habit of self-disclosure, and to what may be termed confessional literature ;—in all these ways, by direct and indirect example, as well as by the revulsions or counter-forces that he provoked, Rousseau is an acknowledged founder of romanticism, and his effect on England has still to be duly explored. It is perhaps first visible in the doctrinaire and pedagogic fiction (Ch. VI.) of the years preceding Scott, and next in the earlier speculations of Wordsworth.

2. The writings of the French revolutionary theorists, including Helvétius, D'Holbach, and Condorcet, soon filter into the English defenders of the Revolution. After 1790, through Godwin, Paine, and other middlemen, and above all through the hostile and passionate descriptions of Burke, the ideas of these radical writers are familiarised in England. The rights of individuals and classes, the value to be attached to social institutions, and the capacity of man for perfection, are all fiercely debated, sometimes even in fiction ; they are all present to the imagination of the time. It is hard to distinguish this literary process from the influence of the Revolution itself, which divided the nation into two camps. On that a book remains to be written ; and one chapter of it must relate the effect of these great events upon our literature. Some material for such a study is scattered through our chapters upon the novel, upon Wordsworth, upon Coleridge, upon Shelley, and upon Hazlitt. See too Ch. XXVI.

3. The voyage of philosophical ideas from Germany to England was accomplished in a slow old-fashioned sailing-boat, and much of the cargo was lost on the way. Dugald Stewart, the chief disseminator of metaphysics before Hamilton, gave a cold and timid welcome to Kant, whose works were but tardily translated or understood. The first version[1] of the *Critique of Pure Reason* appeared in 1838 ; it is curious to find Schopenhauer,[2] years before, proposing himself to make one, to be revised by an English hand. His own great work (1818) was not known in this country till much later. Coleridge was the first to put into wide circulation (though without method, and sometimes without acknowledgment) some of the conceptions of Kant, and still more those of Fichte, and Schelling, and Schlegel. Something is also due to the essays of De Quincey. But it is only towards the end of the period that

the 'transcendental' spirit is fully appropriated and uttered by Carlyle (Ch. xxvi.).

4. Other traditions of thought, opposed to pure rationalism, are found moulding poetic art. Blake, with more energy than coherence, shaped in verse a mystical theosophy of his own; but his debt to Swedenborg or Boehme is not easily definable, and he was neglected in his own day. More fruitful was the influence of Plato, who was translated, as well as Plotinus and other neo-Platonists, by Thomas Taylor, and who so potently affected Shelley. It is easy to see how these forces, as well as those issuing from Germany, ministered to that feeling for the infinite which we have seen to be one of the notes of romanticism; but a particular study of their working is much to be desired.

The most visible effect of this motley movement of ideas upon literary art remains to be mentioned, and is of the first importance. It is nothing less than the revival of metaphysical verse in the grand style. The *Essay on Man* is metaphysical verse; but it is a second-rate statement of second-rate and second-hand ideas. Still, such as it is, it is the last attempt of the sort in England made for fifty years by a great man of letters. There are noble preluding notes in Thomson and Cowper; but Blake was the first to revive, however imperfectly, the style in question; by which is meant here the expression, under the law of beauty, by an imagination fully kindled, of high abstract conceptions. This gift is only fully developed by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and after them by Shelley; also by Keats; and, in his manner, also by Byron. We hear it in 'My Spectre around me night and day,' and in *Dejection*, and *The Prelude*, and *Adonais*, and the revised *Hyperion*, and in *Cain* too, just as clearly as we hear it in the speeches of Macbeth, or Moloch, or in Donne, or in Spenser's Four Hymns. Without this style, the summits of poetry can scarcely be reached; and without a living movement of thought, fertilising poetry while at work outside it, the style cannot be attained.

VII

In speaking of style, we have arrived already at the central problem of the new literature. The renewal of the artistic senses, the larger view of humanity, the quickening power of ideas—these things, after all, are not literature itself; they are only its nourishment. What was to be its *language*? That was the question for poetry and imaginative prose. How

discern, amongst the struggling and alloyed kinds of diction reigning down to 1780—the diction of Pope, of Thomson, of Gray, of Collins, of the folk-ballads, and of 'Ossian,' the diction that would serve, in order that the new material might be shapen and the new spirit expressed? This question begins to be answered after 1780; by 1810 it is answered more decisively; by 1830 it has been answered to the utmost—answered even to the point of exhaustion, as may be seen from the throng of echoes. Each of the poets and masters of prose is found, more or less consciously, giving his own answer. In the critical utterances of Crabbe, of the 'Lake poets,' or of De Quincey upon language, versification, and rhetoric, the process of choice becomes articulate, and sometimes defiant. In the archaisms of Leigh Hunt and Keats, who took words and formations from late Renaissance English, the effort to make a diction is just as apparent. In other writers, like Shelley, there seems to be little of such effort; his style, after the first, comes right of itself, or by the grace of the gods of Hellas. But whether consciously or not, each artist helps in the fashioning of his own instrument, and does not merely inherit it; and, by the end of the period, a whole language has come into being, a new multitude of dialects for the uses of the imagination. We need not forestall our recital; but it is easy to see what were some of the types of poetic utterance, which had to be created again after long disuse or extinction. The species and varieties, appropriated to the recognised forms, such as lyric or versified story, or the essay or the prose reverie, are not here referred to; such an analysis would be intricate and perhaps bewildering. It is simpler to ask in what general ways language responded to the call made upon it by the eager and nimble 'organs' which had come to 'break up their drowsy grave,' and also by the enlarged sympathy of the artists with the human drama. The metaphysical verse, which had arisen for the utterance of speculative ideas, has been mentioned.

1. The dead old abstract diction of the classical poets had to go, though it lingered stubbornly in Campbell and others. There must be a new fount of diction, in order to 'make the too much loved earth more lovely' to the mind's eye and ear. And, in the very heart of the classical age, it had been found, if only at moments. Every one knows some of these anticipations—in the letters of Gray, the *Ode to Evening*, the *Song to David*, or the *Ballad of Charitie*; or in the yet earlier lines, which the poet of *The Seasons* strangely rejected:

> Thus the glad skies,
> The wide-rejoicing earth, the woods, the streams
> With every life they hold, down to the flower
> That paints the lowly vale, or insect-wing
> Wav'd o'er the shepherd's slumber, touch the mind
> To nature tun'd, quick-urging through the nerves
> The glittering spirits in a flood of day.

There were many such passages for the romantic rebels to build upon; but they were too much obscured in the mass of writing that would not serve; in the abstractions and inversions of Thomson, in the 'kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away,' justly censured by Johnson in his *Life of Gray*; in the desert of the later volumes of Chalmers and Anderson. We must not think of the poets who came after 1780 as at all clearly aware of their own pedigree; for this has only been worked out since their time. What they did, therefore, in their search for a language, besides trusting to nature, was just what these scattered ancestors of romanticism had done themselves. They went back to the Old Masters. They leaned over the shoulders of Chaucer, or Milton, or the Elizabethans, and studied for their secret. In this sense the new poetry is a 'revival'; and one of its central and obvious facts is its literary inspiration. This is seen in the search for a fresh vocabulary, by which to represent scenery, or sound, or dim strong impressions of luxury, or the war of the elements. Blake began with the Elizabethans, and learned their delicate lyrical colouring. Coleridge, working on the popular ballad, and Keats on the descriptive poetry of Browne or Chapman, and Beddoes on the imagery of the old tragedians, are familiar instances of this procedure. The idiom of the senses and passions was thus enlarged.

2. The lofty and heroic style had also to be re-created—something adequate to the subjects of *Laodamia*, or *The Cenci*, or *Hyperion*, or the *Hellenics*. There was nothing in the eighteenth century that would meet this need. Nor would those poems have been what they are, without resort to the great traditions of the dramatists, or Milton, or Virgil. Even apart from the choice of matter, the initial effect of the double revival—that of the classics, and that of the older English poets—cannot well be overstated. It furnished a staff, a standard, a control. There are many varieties of heroic language; there is the bare plain kind, such as Shelley achieves in the last speech of Beatrice Cenci, and there is the splendid elaborate kind, such as Wordsworth achieves in his

Fierce confederate storm
Of Sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities.

There is abundance of both these kinds, and of others, in the romantic period; each of the greater poets has one or other of them, if only at moments. This heroic speech is not so evenly diffused amongst them as it is amongst the old dramatists, any more than the gift of pure lyric is so evenly diffused; but it is there, and we are never sure it will not be heard.

3. At the other extreme of diction, the problem was equally pressing, and more critical. There is no upper limit of poetical language, but there is a lower limit; and the determination of that limit, which had been hitherto blurred or left too high, was of moment. The question arose at once out of the poets' increase of sympathy with humble and inarticulate lives, and from the need of bringing their fates and doings, and also their talk, into verse. Crabbe we shall find solving this question in his way; but he did not transfigure, in the act of retaining, the lower and plainer sorts of language. It was Wordsworth who faced the problem and answered it, less by his critical theories than by his verse. The result, in spite of all his mistakes, was not to lower poetry, but to extend its territory.

One of the fruits of this general retrieval of poetic language, whether won by mother-wit, or by the refreshed attention to the Old Masters, or by both, need not be ignored. This is the reaction of language itself upon thought, vision, and feeling. Thomson and Gray were born into a false style which sometimes blinds and deafens them, and they cannot perceive the object through its mists. When we read, in *Spring*:

Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
Form, fronting on the sun, thy showery prism;
And to the sage-instructed eye unfold
The various twine of light, by thee dissolved
From the white-mingling maze;

we feel that a sham diction has kept the poet from seeing the rainbow, which is not a 'twine of light,' and does not suggest a prism. He has to work himself free of this diction, and often he does so, and is simple and homely:

The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake;
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove;

or simple and lofty:

The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

As a truer diction is accomplished, it comes to purge the ear and vision ; the study of Virgil, of *Paradise Lost*, of the *Faerie Queene*, releases the poetic perceptions ; not without toil and penance and many remnants of error, but it does release them. So Keats, taught by Milton to find the right words, comprehends the passions of a fallen god :

> Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.

And when Blake writes :

> And mournful lean Despair
> Brings me yew to deck my grave,

it is Spenser's Despair, not Satan's or Beelzebub's, that starts his mind upon the vision and gives him the right pattern of emblem. With all this, we must not exaggerate the kind or amount of inspiration that the Old Masters gave ; they did their work, and retired ; but once the true key of language is found, and however it is found, it keeps feeling and sensation from going wrong. The more definite bequests of mediæval romance and ballad may appear best as an introduction to the verse of Scott. It is needless to speak of them too soon, in connection with Crabbe, or Cowper, or Burns.

CHAPTER II

THE END OF THE CLASSICAL VERSE: CRABBE

I. New lease of life, 1780-1800. Importance of studying this phase.
II. *The Rolliad*; John Wolcot ('Peter Pindar'); Whig skits and travesties.
III. Anti-revolutionary satire. William Gifford, his *Baviad* and *Maeviad*, and translations; Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*; *The Anti-Jacobin*, its authors; attacks on Whigs, Radicals, subversive doctrine, 'sentimental' and anarchical ethics, and literary mawkishness and affectation. *The New Morality.*
IV. Erasmus Darwin and *The Botanic Garden*; his 'scientific' poetry, machinery, and theories of imagery and diction.
V. Crabbe: cause of his early acceptance; his attack on Goldsmith, and on the romantic novel. Early works, *The Village.*
VI. Crabbe: digressions into freer, romantic verse: *Sir Eustace Grey.*
VII. Crabbe: *Parish Register, Borough, Tales.*
VIII. Crabbe: *Tales of the Hall*; his poetic theories; 'poetry without an atmosphere.' Examples of his stories.
IX. Crabbe: his technique in rhyme and diction.
X. Johnson's *Lives.* Samuel Rogers: *Pleasures of Memory*; *Italy.*
XI. Thomas Campbell. Dispute over Pope's poetry: Bowles and Byron.

I

As the third quarter of the eighteenth century wears on, bringing us in sight of Blake and Cowper, we become restive at waiting by the sickbed of the old classical school[1] of verse, and wish that we had done with it. But its life is tougher than we thought, and a little patience is worth while. So strong a tradition dies hard; the familiar distich, the hard blank line, the factitious diction and idiom, the habit of arguing and preaching and reviling in verse, and the trick of parody, go on long after Blake and Cowper have told them to depart. More than that, these forms and fashions of verse actually have, after 1780, spurts of active life and refreshed invention. They enlist Gifford, they enlist Canning. And, even afterwards, they have a kind of life beyond the grave. They pass into some of the poets of the new age, who deride or ignore them; and they are traceable in Wordsworth and in Keats. We should watch, therefore, some of the less shadowy survivors

of the old school, who are so vociferous during the age and by the side of the long-surviving Crabbe, the last great craftsman to employ the same technique. After leaving Crabbe, some poets of a shaken reputation, such as Rogers and Campbell, are to be noticed; for their roots, at any rate, are in the tradition of Pope, and they begin to write before the end of the century. There is no need to pause over verse-makers who died without the need of ridicule; such as William Mason, the biographer of Gray, with his frosty and studied classic tragedies; or as William Hayley, who is remembered as the biographer of Cowper and Romney, and as the generous if unperceiving friend of Blake, and not for his once popular *Triumphs of Temper* (1781), which sets forth, in a vein of genteel banter, the uses of good temper to those in search of a husband.

The classical verse and diction were doubtless doomed; but then they were their own executioners. It was they that mocked themselves to death; and they did not wait for the new poetry to do so. *The Rolliad* and *The Anti-Jacobin* embody, besides a political purpose, the protest of lively good sense, unpoetical humour, and the feeling for absurdity, against the aberrations into which literature had fallen. It is now the 'age of prose and reason' that, in a moment of dying illumination, judges its own weaknesses, and at the same time the failures of the weaker romanticists. When Canning mimics Erasmus Darwin, it is in the best eighteenth-century style, which Pope himself might have envied. When Thomas Warton and Mason are parodied in *The Rolliad*, they are treated as feeble and inefficient rebels against the true canons of poetry. Wordsworth, too, attacks Gray and Ossian, but in a solemn denunciatory way, which is not always either critical or amusing. The wit of the last classical writers is thus sharpened for new victims, some of whom come from its own camp; and, thus encouraged, it lasts to the end of the century and beyond. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809) is a belated essay in the same kind of warfare.

There is an unbroken series of satires of this order between 1780 and 1798, formed by *The Rolliad*, the verses of Wolcot, Gifford, and Mathias, and *The Anti-Jacobin*. They vary much in wit and in seriousness of conviction, but are all full of wrath or venom, and all employ one or other of the forms that had come into being or reached perfection in the ages of Dryden and Pope,—the heroic couplet, the octosyllabic couplet, the irregular ode, the pungent lyric, the rattling insolent

doggerel stanza. They proceed from both parties, but the honours rest on the whole with the Tories, or Liberal-Tories, who are better scholars, and more high-bred amid all their sarcasm and invective, and who have left more literature behind them.

II

The dust lies deep now on the collection of Whig lampoons and parodies known as *The Rolliad*,[1] which began to appear after Pitt's installation in 1784, were first collected in 1795, and ran through twenty-one editions before the end of the century. A guerilla band of the beaten party, with surprising persistency, impudence, gaiety, and zest opened fire on the ministry and all its friends. The work falls into three successive parts, of which the first, the *Criticisms on the Rolliad*, is by far the most spirited. An unlucky, jolter-headed Devon squire, Colonel Rolle, had made an arrogant remark in the House on the occasion of the 'Westminster Scrutiny,' when the Government failed to unseat Fox on a charge of illegality. Colonel Rolle is thereupon made the whipping-boy for his party; his boast of descent from Duke Rollo furnishes a peg for a mock pedigree, coat-of-arms, and motto—'*Jouez bien votre rôle*, or, as we have sometimes seen it spelt, Rolle.' *The Rolliad* is an imaginary epic in honour of the family and its fortunes in war, at court, on the gallows, and in the service of the Tory party. Fragments of the epic are quoted, which serve as a text for the prose 'criticisms.' Such, for example, is the character of Pitt, the 'new Octavius'—'pert without fire, without experience sage'—the only passage from the book that is still often quoted. The verse, whether it be deliberately ridiculous, or satirical, is of the hackneyed classical kind; but not much of it can be remembered, for the now forgotten names cluster as thick as those in *The Dunciad*, and the united gang of wits never produced a single page, either in verse or prose, that endures like the happier pieces of *The Anti-Jacobin*. But *The Rolliad* is still sprightly, and curious, and unduly ignored; it gives a lively picture of the most fleeting of all things, the jokes and personalities that fly about the House of Commons; and the mock-Addisonian seriousness of the *Criticisms* is well sustained. Yet who now cares for gibes against the tea tax, or for the ivory bed presented by Mrs. Hastings to the Queen, or for the sanitary drawbacks of the House, or for sneers against the continence of Mr. Pitt and the learning of Mr. Dundas? To keep these things alive an Attic salt is wanted, of which

not even George Ellis, and apparently not Dr. Laurence nor General Burgoyne nor the rest of the company, could furnish more than a poor pinch. The second venture, entitled *Probationary Odes for the Laureateship*, brings us nearer to literature. They are a series of poems supposed to be written in rivalry for the succession to the deceased William Whitehead, and contain some close and roguish parodies not only of Macpherson, who was now a ministerial penman, but of the expiring school of Gray. Mason and the two Wartons were on the Tory side, and they also represented a style of elaborate verse that was still resented and mocked for its 'obscurity.' The attacks of Johnson on Gray are oddly echoed in those of Johnson's political foes upon Gray's disciples; and the sour 'Table of Instructions' given by the King to Thomas Warton, the nominated laureate ('seventhly and finally, that it may not be amiss to be a little intelligible'), is a curious item that marks the date (1785). The roughest and most ribald of these satires are found in the *Political Miscellanies*, the third instalment of the work; they approach the sewerage of Wolcot himself. Writers such as those of *The Rolliad* are like barbarians on the confines of civilised territory; their methods and manners in war hardly come within the comity of nations; and in a little time they perish.

John Wolcot, or 'Peter Pindar'[1] (1738-1819), directed that his coffin should be laid touching that of the author of *Hudibras*; but his true place is by the ashes of Gillray—though at a respectable distance, indeed, from any real artist. He belongs to the history of caricature and mimicry; for, like the authors of *The Rolliad* and the pictorial squibbers of the time, he caught to the life, and stamped on the mind of the country, the figure and accents of the King. Here he is a true low comedian in rhyme: a kind of Foote, for mischievous accuracy of idiom and gesture; aping and mocking endlessly with the same blackguardly good-humoured gusto: so that his portraits of King George meeting the cattle-driver, or visiting the brewery, or inspecting the mysterious dumpling, are a living likeness, which we can verify by reference to the *Diary* of Miss Burney and other authorities. Beside these triumphs, most of Wolcot's attacks on Johnson and Boswell and Mrs. Piozzi (*Bozzy and Piozzi*), or on the traveller Bruce or Sir Joseph Banks, are but daubs, though never quite void of gross fun. The great fair of literature is incomplete without its merryandrews and street performers; and of these, in the time we are reviewing, Peter Pindar is the most amusing and vociferous,

and when we wish for the relief of being vulgar we can listen to him.

Of one other personage, himself, he gives a true and unabashed representation. The sharp and butcherly but not ill-formed or witless features of his portrait seem to emerge as we follow him from his score of odes on the Royal Academicians (1785), through his heroi-comic *Lousiad*, and his *Peeps at St. James's*, and his endless pasquinades, odes, and doggerel, to the end of his five volumes (1812). With a certain slipshod power he masters, or employs, a great variety of styles and measures—the ode, the epigram, the ballad, the parody, or the heroic couplet; always with a lax fertility and resource of rhyme, and an interminable volubility of tongue; as he says:

> A desultory way of writing,
> A hop and step and jump mode of inditing
> My great and wise relation, Pindar, boasted;

And his rhymes were begotten

> Amidst the hurly-burly of my brain,
> Where the mad lyric Muse, with pain,
> Hammering hard verse her skill employs
> And beats the tinman's shop in noise,
> Catching wild tropes and similes
> That hop about like swarms of fleas. . . .

The echo of Butler's couplets is heard here plain enough; but there the likeness ends; for Wolcot has neither Butler's learning, nor his background of stern disenchanted thought; instead, he uses at times the clown's privilege and penalty of turning serious out of hours, and concocts a copy of verses to a glowworm or a sentimental ballad without compunction. His pieces in Devon dialect are better. Such as he was, his vogue was immense. His stuff was translated, and he was considered worth an attempt to silence by bribery, which he boasts that he resisted; and he went on railing when he was blind and old. We do not pity him when he met his equal in railing; in 1800 Gifford addressed him an *Epistle*, and the kennel fight of words became a bodily scrimmage in a bookshop. This tradition of relentless personalities, though transformed out of its primitive foulness, by no means passed away from literature; we find it, of course, in Byron, and much more strangely in the satiric sallies of Shelley against Castlereagh and Eldon. Gifford himself, indeed, received a verbal cudgelling from Hazlitt, who practised the art of self defence with his usual relish.

III

William Gifford's thirty pages of autobiography, prefixed to his translation of Juvenal in 1802, outlast all his original verses and most of his criticism. They are in the sterner sort of plain prose, curt, bitter, and not undignified—classical in its way. There is none of the declamation which he came to acquire and practise, and which he would have felt bound to employ had his story been in verse; for the great weakness of the eighteenth century was to see the differences between verse and prose in a false light. A drunken father, a tyrannic guardian, a schooling broken by life as a seaman and as a cobbler's apprentice, a native rage for knowledge, without money or means to find the tools, so that he was driven to write his mathematical problems on beaten leather 'with a blunted awl'; a persistence, that revealed to him his strong memory and power to write, and that was finally rewarded by escape from the prison cell in which his youthful mind had been shut; these are the elements that went to make Gifford's honest, warped, truculent, narrow spirit, never quite satisfied that it was even with mankind for its early sufferings. His story is not unlike that of Crabbe, and Gifford was also relieved by a patron, Lord Grosvenor. He had meanwhile made his way to Oxford, increased his Latin, and felt the fascination of Juvenal and Persius. First, he produced in 1794 his *Baviad*, written in the style of Churchill, but with a greater measure of acrid faculty, and it at once became known. The persons and works that he tears to pieces in this satire, the so-called 'Della Cruscan'[1] poets, did not, and do not, exist. But their sickliness was popular for the hour; Mrs. Piozzi, settled at Florence, their priestess; and a Mr. Greathead, a Mr. Merry, and a Mr. Jerningham, who wrote of and to one another in organs like *The World*, under female signatures of the 'Laura Matilda' sort. They were mildly and feebly revolutionary in their chatter and their tenets, and attracted the Tory scourge all the more in consequence. Their wraiths flit across the *Diary of Samuel Rogers*,[2] who met them at the house of Helen Maria Williams,[3] conversing with admiration on Thomas Paine. The curious can find examples of their preciosity in the works of Mary Robinson, known as 'Perdita,' the famous beauty, actress, and dupe of George Regent. In the following year Gifford produced his *Maeviad*, a work in the same bloodthirsty, overdone style.

Gifford's two satires[4] are the last forcible examples of the

'imitation,' or transplantation of a Latin satirical classic into modern surroundings. This kind was practised by Boileau, brought into English by Oldham and Rochester, and perfected by Pope and Johnson. Gifford adores and celebrates the shade of Pope:

> So may thy varied verse, from age to age,
> Inform the simple, and delight the sage:

and in the *Baviad* he does for the first satire of Persius what Pope had done earlier for Horace, and Johnson for Juvenal; that is, he follows him verse by verse, substituting modern for ancient instances. Gifford, like Pope, persuades himself that he has a great moral mission to crush small poets, whom he typifies as the Bavius and Maevius contemned by Virgil; and, in fact, as Scott put it, he 'squabashed at one blow a set of coxcombs who might have humbugged the world long enough.' He was right, but his violence is such that some of the absurdity he derides recoils on himself when he treats his victims as criminals and lepers; most of them were quite respectable creatures, as well as poetasters. In the *Maeviad* he is remarkably indiscriminate. It is directed against the abuses of the contemporary drama, and is a valuable document, for that reason, of the fashions of the hour, else so fugitive; but Gifford fiercely ridicules tolerable comedy like that of Holcroft or Colman in the same breath as the sickliest adaptations from the German. His verse is loud and monotonous, like the noise of a sledge-hammer hitting wild, and in precision of insult is not to be compared to that of Canning. These were the poems that the keen, capricious, honest, bored old arbiter of wit, Horace Walpole, described, somewhat strangely, as 'soothing.' It is pleasant to think that any word of William Gifford's should ever have soothed any mortal. But the crack of the heads broken in 1794 has long ceased either to soothe or to excite. Gifford's next task (before his exchange of gutter-missiles with Wolcot) was to conduct *The Anti-Jacobin*.

But his translations are not to be overlooked, for they are perhaps the best evidence of his power in verse. They are close, careful, and full of strength. The rhythms are far more flexible and various than in the *Baviad*. The high-pitched parts are of the same kind, but the easier and more conversational ones show the healthy influence of Crabbe, and episodes like that of the turbot in Juvenal's satire go well into Crabbe's style. In the Preface to his *Persius*, Gifford defends the freedom of his metre against the objection

that my lines run into one another, and that they would have pleased more had the sense concluded with the couplet. I once thought the same . . . but subsequently formed a different (I must say a more correct) opinion of the duty of a translator.

Gifford does not translate politely; he softens and modifies little; he goes through the dirty part of his work like a man, without relish and without shirking; and he genuinely shares the moral indignation of his originals. His later offences against criticism do not cancel either the merit of these versions or his service as an editor of the old dramatists. The subject of his editorial labours on the *Quarterly Review* belongs to the sequel (Ch. XIII.).

A now spectral satiric poem, once long in vogue, *The Pursuits of Literature*, by Thomas James Mathias,[1] may be named as filling the brief interval between *The Maeviad* and *The Anti-Jacobin*. This learned, conceited, and unbearable work, in four books (1794-7), ran through thirteen editions in eleven years, and is certainly a mirror, on its political and social side, of anti-revolutionary taste and prejudice. It is in dialogue, and the effect is that of 'a rivulet of text meandering through a meadow of margin,' for it is choked with curious, usually rancorous and pedantic notes in prose, and with 'notes upon the note.' It is a kind of petty *Dunciad*, and a museum of allusions to contemporary writers and politicians. The verse is of the splenetic, sometimes telling sort made current by Gifford, but is without Gifford's energy. If this were all, Mathias would not be worthy of mention; but his literary views are more refreshing. He represents in his way an appeal from the false to the truer romanticism. He assails Godwin and Lewis; also Gilpin, for his æsthetic pedantry; and Ireland, for his bogus *Vortigern*. He is well seen in Greek, and his anthology[2] of Italian *canzoni* and sonnets (1802) is an excellent one, and early in the field; it extends from Dante to Guidi and Menzini. In his Preface (written in Italian) he proclaims his wish to serve the 'Renaissance of Italian poetry and letters in England,' and to restore it to the 'ancient and accustomed potency' that it enjoyed in the days of Elizabeth; and he calls for the institution of Italian chairs in our universities—a wish that has been seldom fulfilled. He is also interested in matters 'Runic,' namely in Old Norse literature, and in 'Odin's magic tree.' Mathias feels the void that was soon to be filled up by Scott and Coleridge, when he laments (*Pursuits*, Dial. iv., 1797) that 'the specious miracles of romance have never of late years produced a poet.' His own

pompous heroics are of the old school, but in his preferences he is forward-looking, and pays his respects both to Cowper and Burns. In his own day Mathias was welcomed not for these prophetic tastes, but as an ally of Canning, who praises him in *The New Morality* as the 'nameless bard,' the honest patriot, and the rigid *censor morum*. But the work of Mathias is forgotten in that of his eulogist.

The wit of *The Anti-Jacobin*,[1] *or Weekly Examiner* (20th November 1797 to 9th July 1798), is now best known from a handful of its verses, which are quoted apart from their setting—*The Friend of Humanity*, and *The U-niversity of Gottingen*, and *The Loves of the Triangles*. But it is only to be fairly enjoyed in the original large yellowed sheets in double columns, edited by Gifford; with their regular bill of fare—the 'Lies,' 'Misrepresentations,' and 'Mistakes' of the Whigs, the scraps of political news, and the 'answers to correspondents.' There is a pervading form and finish which makes *The Anti-Jacobin* not so much a newspaper as a piece of literature. The chief contributors, besides Gifford himself, are Canning, Frere, and George Ellis; and in the poetical department their shares have been more or less closely assigned. Canning and Frere have a main hand in the best things; to Ellis fall many of the Horatian parodies; but *The Duke and the Taxing-Man*, at the expense of 'Duke Smithson of Northumberland,' is set down to Lord Macdonald, and is one of the happiest mock-Percy ballads of the time. It is stated that Pitt contributed here and there, and that he wrote the last verse in *The U-niversity of Gottingen*, 'Sun, moon, and thou, vain world, adieu.'

The poetry was first collected in 1801, and is still alive. It is alive because its wit and pungency are inspired by real rage, hatred, and conviction. Canning and his friends are as dead in earnest and as much alarmed as their master, Burke, and in the same cause, and wrote against much the same principles and persons. They are not simply pea-shooting in order to sting people's faces in a carnival. They think society is menaced in its foundations by a disease that has spread from France; a disease in the first instance of the brain, but one which attacks all the other members. 'Philosophy' begins by sapping the faith; it is then translated into political anarchy, and the family goes down in the wreck. A new, pretentious code of morals is put up like a house of cards, which it is the work, or the fierce amusement, of the Anti-Jacobins to shatter. The 'rights of man,' truly interpreted, mean mob-rule, free love, and judicial murder. Worst of all, a nauseous

sentiment and rhetoric (infuriating to men of classical taste and scholarship) cloak these enormities, and are most fitly punished by raking parody. All this the writers of *The Anti-Jacobin* truly believe, and hence the red and hectically pulsing wrath of conviction in the poem called *The New Morality*, which appeared in their final number (almost at the same time as *Lyrical Ballads*), and which is the last really effective salvo of the old poetic artillery. The other skits and parodies of the book are more like jets of Greek fire for the scorching and blistering of the enemy. In form it is one of the most masterly productions of the whole classical school. There are many touches of Dryden in its impetus and cadence, as in the lines on 'Sensibility':

> Sweet child of sickly Fancy—Her of yore
> From her lov'd France Rousseau to exile bore;
> And while midst lakes and mountains wild he ran
> Full of himself, and shunn'd the haunts of Man,
> Taught her o'er each lone vale and Alpine steep
> To lisp the stories of his wrongs, and weep;
> Taught her to cherish still in either eye,
> Of tender tears a plentiful supply,
> And pour them in the brooks that babbled by—
> Taught her to mete by rule her feelings strong,
> False by degrees, and delicately wrong,
> For the crush'd Beetle, *first*—the widow'd Dove,
> And all the warbled sorrows of the grove;
> *Next* for poor suff'ring Guilt—and, *last* of all,
> For Parents, Friends, a King and Country's fall.

This poem cannot be too carefully studied, if we would understand the meaning of the conservative reaction in England, at its origins, and in its essence, and in its literary expression. At first we think the writers are simply unscrupulous, snatching at any weapon in a holy war—the kind of war wherein least scruple is shown. But as we read the whole *Anti-Jacobin* through, prose and verse, we see that they have really lost their heads, like the nation. They confound, not in bad faith, all kinds of persons; the Whigs both moderate and extreme, such as the writers of *The Rolliad*, and the doctrinaires and republicans who had thrown up their hats in 1790. Fox and Erskine and the Duke of Bedford are herded with Paine and Thelwall and Condorcet. It is well known how Coleridge comes in for a vicious kick, and Charles Lamb,[1] who heeded not politics, for a comically wanton one, which may have entertained him:

> C———E and S———Y, L——D and L——BE and Co,
> Tune all your mystic harps to praise LEPAUX!

All this muddling of ranks, and persons, and distances looks strange enough in the light of history; but that is just the interest of *The Anti-Jacobin*; it is inspired by a true and outraged sense of patriotism; its operations are conducted with brilliancy, with real genius; nay more, it shows a sense of some of the intellectual and social bearings of the Revolution, from which the more destructive criticism of current moral and political systems does actually date, so that the modern world is different in consequence. Burke foresaw the same thing in an incomparably larger way. What he and the Anti-Jacobins underrated was the native tenacity of the English mind to things established. It must not be thought that these considerations take us too far from a work which is now remembered by a few squibs and travesties. But the fun of the Anti-Jacobins must not be lost sight of.

With a sound tactical instinct, Canning and his band extended their lash to the literary follies of the Whigs, and of all their other foes. They are the true progeny of the Scriblerus Club, making war on nonsense, and, above all, on learned or pedantic nonsense, as such. They mimic the Ossianic proclamations of Napoleon, and mock, justly enough, at Dr. Parr's 'buzz prose' —a phrase implying an irreverent allusion to his famed wig. The more foolish sort of German play, still rife in adapted form on the English stage (see Ch. XXI. *post*), is gibbeted in *The Rovers*,[1] which was itself acted at the Haymarket in 1811, and which, like Sheridan's *Critic*, can still be joyfully read without any knowledge of the thing derided. *The Double Arrangement*, as the play is also termed, is a matrimonial arrangement, and is surrounded with the happiest circumstance of farce. Erasmus Darwin, being a Liberal as well as a bad poet, is slowly and studiously roasted in *The Loves of the Triangles*. The forgotten John Payne Knight and his *Progress of Civil Society* are still more scientifically disposed of in *The Progress of Man*, which contains another satire on the extreme revolutionary view of marriage:—

> For LOVE *then* only flaps his purple wings,
> When uncontroul'd by PRIESTCRAFT or by KINGS.

Southey, whose lot was to be mauled by Canning as a callow Radical, and by Byron and Hazlitt as an apostate and a Tory, is thrice at least attacked. Etonian scholarship, in this case, barbed political hatred; the sapphics and dactylics of Southey's verse are carefully marked, in the prefaces to the parodies, to show their incorrect scansion; and thousands who have

laughed at *The Friend of Humanity and the Needy Knife-Grinder* have failed to see the jest upon the versification, in which longs and shorts are confounded, and how the false gallop of

– ⏑ | – – | – ⏑ ⏑ | – ⏑ | – –
Fast o'er | the bleak | heath rattling | drove a | chariot

is exactly echoed in

– ⏑ | – – | – ⏑ ⏑ | – ⏑ | – –
Was it | the Squire | for killing | of his | game, or . . .

It is said that the paper was stopped by Pitt, at the instance of the alarmed moderate Tories; but the attack was renewed for many years, by other hands, and with infinitely less spirit, in *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*,[1] which is announced in the last number of *The Anti-Jacobin*. This sequel opens with a picture by Gillray representing a cheerful blowsy damsel named Truth, holding a torch to reveal the toads and bats in the 'Cave of Jacobinism.' The *Review* lived long enough to attack Mackintosh (see Ch. IX. *post*) for modifying his own revulsion of feeling against the French Revolution; but in 1821 it expired.

IV

The best known victim of *The Anti-Jacobin* is doubtless Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). The first portion to be published of his poem, *The Botanic Garden*, came out in 1789, under the title of *The Loves of the Plants*; it was this that Canning fatally parodied in *The Loves of the Triangles*. But it was really the second part; and the true first part, called *The Economy of Vegetation*, was set in its place when the whole work appeared in 1791. *The Botanic Garden* had ten years of popularity, and a fourth edition appeared even in 1799, after Canning had fired his volley. It was admired by Horace Walpole.[2] It died, perhaps, of the change of taste as much as of ridicule, and for the historian it remains the model of a false style carried to its utmost by the native energy of the writer.

Charles Darwin[3] has told with pleasant demureness and piety the career of his grandfather, Erasmus, an inquirer of genuine skill and sometimes prophetic sagacity in the field of biological and medical science. *Zoonomia* (1794-6), a dissertation on pathology, and *Phytologia* (1799), which attributes

something like consciousness to plants, cover to a surprising degree the same range of problems—inheritance, selection, 'insectivorous plants, and the analysis of the emotions and sociological impulses'—as occupied the younger Darwin; and many suggestions of the same kind are found in the prose notes to *The Botanic Garden* and to *The Temple of Nature* (1803). But verse Erasmus Darwin regarded as a tool rather than an end; a tool, indeed, that was to be burnished and sharpened carefully, but one whose aim was the enlargement and commendation of knowledge; in his own words, he wished to 'enlist imagination under the banner of science.' His science and his poetry retain an historical interest, but little more; and while his biological theories, in their relation to those of Lamarck and of Charles Darwin, are more than curious, his poetry, instead of pointing to the future, marks the exhaustion—in the very act of revival—of a perishing method and style.

Besides turning the forces at play in the air and the other elements into nymphs and gnomes, Erasmus Darwin judged that the Linnean classification of plants by the numbers of their stamens and pistils might be graciously adjusted to verse by personifying the first as 'swains' and the second as 'belles,' and by working out, with dreadful insistence, their complicated 'loves':

> *Media's* soft chains *five* suppliant boys confess,
> And hand in hand the laughing belle address.

The anthers of *Curcuma* are often without filaments, and thus we hear that

> *Five* beardless boys the obdurate beauty move
> With soft attentions of Platonic love.

Darwin dressed out a whole garden in this fashion, and *The Loves of the Plants* is nothing if not systematic. Canning's preface to his parody is as good as any of his verses:

> I am persuaded that there is no Science, however abstruse, nay, no Trade or Manufacture, which may not be taught by a Didactic Poem. In that before you, an attempt is made (not unsuccessfully) to enlist the Imagination under the banners of Geometry. Botany I found done to my hand. . . . I trust that the range and variety of illustration with which I have endeavoured to ornament and enlighten the arid truths of Euclid and Algebra, will be found to have smoothed the road of Demonstration, to have softened the rugged features of Elementary Propositions, and, as it were, to have strewed the Asses' Bridge with flowers.

The application is in this strain:

> Yet why, Ellipsis, at thy fate repine?
> More lasting bliss, securer joys, are thine.
> Though to each Fair his treach'rous wish may stray,
> Though each in turn may seize transient sway,
> 'Tis thine with mild coercion to restrain,
> Twine round his struggling heart, and bind with endless chain.

The loves of the 'blest Isosceles' and the 'fair Parabola' are equally well known; and they are still readable, while most of Darwin is not. His unlucky plan was suggested to him by Miss Seward, who wrote a little piece of prefatory verse in the Ovidian manner, but handed over the Linnean theme to Darwin, 'as not strictly proper for a female pen.' He interwove in it his Rosicrucian sylphs and salamanders; and this machinery he borrowed from *The Rape of the Lock*; steeping himself in Pope—in the decorative, fanciful, or coloured parts of Pope, not in the *Dunciad* or the *Moral Essays*—and catching, at any rate, the pomp and ring of Pope's heroics. The sound of his verse, indeed, is like that of a gong; and Darwin feels, crudely and mechanically, but more than any other follower of Pope, the value of open vowels, seven in a line if possible:

> Near and more near your beamy cars approach—

and he has the sense of climax and onset, and the courage of his blatancy, as is shown in the much-quoted passage on the final crash of the worlds (*Economy of Vegetation*, iv. 379—'Roll on, ye stars'). This manner he brought to a pitch of bastard splendour, so that it perished with a certain noise, and Darwin rather than Canning put an end to Darwin.

But he also had a real and raw perception of violent colour, which plays its perverted part in the revival of the artistic senses during this period. Darwin made up a dogma accordingly. 'The words expressive of those ideas belonging to vision make up the principal part of poetry'; whereas, he adds, prose is above all things 'abstract' in its vocabulary. This is at least an attempt to remember that poetry is concrete; it is a revolt, however blind, against the current vices of poetical diction. But Darwin acts upon his dogma without mercy; in one passage of seventeen lines occur the words, *bright*, *star*, *golden*, *dazzling*, *bright* again, *lucid*, *pearly*, *glittering*, *crystal*, and *blazed*. This unshaded diction is everywhere; 'the poet writes to the eye,' and he succeeds in hurting it. But the stuff is different from that of the Hayleys, who are unable even to form a nefarious purpose. Darwin's most fatal defect is one

upon which the parodists did not fail to fasten; it is simply that he finds nothing irrelevant to his topic. He is eloquent and philanthropic when he praises Howard; but burlesque is often superfluous. In one canto, where the air-nymphs are introduced as the 'machines,' there are divagations on the formation of steam, the waters of the goddess Buxtonia, the loves of Jupiter, the decease of a Mrs. French, the principles of the common pump, the doings of Hercules, and finally on the charitable actions of a Miss Jones, a native of Ireland:

> Sound, nymphs of Helicon, the trump of fame,
> And teach Hibernian echoes Jones's name,
> Bind round her polish'd brows the civic bay,
> And drag the fair Philanthropist to day.

Darwin's ideal of sonority survived, we may think, in some pages of Rogers and of Campbell; and it is well to inspect his works, if only to see what was still admired when the *Lyrical Ballads* were being composed, and against what manner of writing their authors revolted.

Charles Darwin, writing in 1879, speaks of having 'met with old men who spoke with a degree of enthusiasm about his grandfather's poetry, quite incomprehensible at the present day'; and quotes Horace Walpole's praise of the 'twelve verses,' which Walpole considered 'the most sublime passages in any author, or in any of the few languages with which I am acquainted.' These are from *The Triumph of Flora*, and open thus:

> '—Let there be Light!' proclaimed the Almighty Lord.
> Astonished Chaos heard the potent word;—
> Through all his realms the kindling Ether runs,
> And the mass starts into a million suns.

Thus may sharp sceptical wits, when for once they give a loose to admiration, be taken in. But some of Darwin's lines are divided from grandeur by a narrow yet bottomless gulf; and let no man boast, for the *nearly* sublime is the hardest thing of all to detect, in a contemporary. These problems arise at the upper limits of poetry; at the lower, there are others which call for equal care; and these are abundant enough in the work of Crabbe,[1] the last of the greater 'classical' poets.

V

The first phase of George Crabbe's life (1754-1832) was one of harsh struggle and lumbering experiment, and lasts to

the publication of *The Village* in 1783. His early life as an apothecary's apprentice, a quay-labourer, and an unsuccessful surgeon; his bitter penury, and his solicitations of London publishers and patrons, were brought to an end by the aid of Edmund Burke, who in 1781 befriended Crabbe and induced him to publish *The Library*. *Inebriety* (1775) and *The Candidate* (1780) had already fallen flat. He became a clergyman, was appointed chaplain (again at Burke's instance) to the Duke of Rutland, published *The Village*, and married Sarah Elmy, whose family had helped him just to keep the wolf from the door. After *The Newspaper* (1785) he produced no more for the greater part of a generation, and held a series of livings, chiefly in the Eastern counties. He had made a name, but it was fading, until in 1807 it was revived by *The Parish Register*, and Crabbe's third and more prosperous phase now began. *The Borough* (1810) and *Tales in Verse* (1812) were also widely acclaimed. His last volume was *Tales of the Hall* (1819). He had meantime become rector of Trowbridge, where he remained all his life; but he became a recognised and welcome personage in London society, and cheered up very considerably. His visit to Sir Walter Scott in Edinburgh occurred in 1822. He left behind him a number of posthumous *Tales*, wisely saved and published by his son, together with most of his other works, in 1834. The modern editors have added a good many poems to the list. Crabbe, after the reaction from his first fame, hardly came into his own till the later nineteenth century.

Crabbe has no new theories of humanity; he is one of the poets and storytellers who simply watch mankind and describe it. He is a novelist in verse of real mark and power, and his code and ruling conceptions precede—and in no way prophesy—those of 1789, though he wrote on till 1819, and even later, and lived till 1832. His first work of any character, *The Village* (1783), came out in the same decade as Blake's *Poetical Sketches*, Burns's Kilmarnock poems, and Cowper's *Task*. For this Crabbe is miscalled a pioneer, though he really stands at the close of a literary age. If he is a pioneer at all, it is more in the history of fiction than in that of poetry. His style and verse, with some exceptions, are of the old school. His aims are those of the preacher and the photographic satirist, not those of the makers of romance. Hence his vogue and its long eclipse. Burke, nobly, launched him;[1] Johnson read him 'with great delight';[2] he chronicled realities of their own time in a cadence which they knew and sanctioned; he tacked a homespun moral to a concrete anecdote in a familiar rhyme

which disconcerted nobody. If he at first wrote in order to show up Goldsmith's idyllic picture of Auburn, he only did so in a modification of that classical style and rhetoric of which Goldsmith had used another modification. Later, the arch-reviewers Jeffrey and Gifford, who briefed themselves against Wordsworth and his fellows, poured their praise on Crabbe, and indeed rated him more truly than a later age, if with some extravagance. Crabbe was priceless to them; he showed what could be done in the old poetic manner which they officially upheld, as distinct from the new poetic manner which they were vainly committed to obstructing. But their praises perished with their rule, to the detriment of Crabbe's glory, which dwindled although Scott honoured him, and Byron, in a famous line, spoke to his 'sternness' and veracity. Wordsworth's appreciation is of note, being unwittingly a tribute to the 'classical' school which he detested. Crabbe's works, he said, 'will last, from their combined merits as Poetry and Truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance.' He especially admired the sketch of the poorhouse in *The Village*, no doubt for its 'truth'; but the 'poetry,' which is in the minute style of Pope when Pope drew the deathbed of Zimri, Duke of Buckingham, Wordsworth might at best have been expected to tolerate:

> Theirs is yon House that holds the parish poor,
> Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
> There, where the putrid vapours, flagging, play,
> And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;—
> There children dwell who know no parents' care;
> Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there!
> Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
> Forsaken wives, and mothers never wed. . . .

As the more winged kind of poetry triumphed, this sort of excellence went out of vogue, and Crabbe with it, to be defended from time to time by connoisseurs like Edward FitzGerald; and Newman warmly admired *Tales of the Hall*. But the reason why Crabbe is little read lies deeper than the advent of Keats and Tennyson, or than his own undeniable gift for being tedious and obvious. His scene is too like that of life as we know it really to be; and most of us, so far from rejoicing in that scene, go to poetry and fiction in order to forget it and to be charmed out of all necessity for reckoning with it. But there is a minority. Crabbe's stories, like those of the late George Gissing, must retain a small yet stubborn public, who

do not mind being made to wince by the representation of life as they know it to be, even though the tones of the recital be hard, grim, and didactic. The chronicles of Aldborough at the close of the eighteenth century, and of New Grub Street at the end of the nineteenth, do they not endure like hammered iron-work? Why should they be pleasant?

Crabbe has left no doubt as to the shade of his conservatism, which comes out in his temper towards Goldsmith's poetry and towards the 'romantic' novels that preceded Scott. Like Fielding, he made several false starts, and then hit on his own talent because he was angry with another man's book. But he attacked a different illusion from Fielding—not the worthless and cunning 'virtue' which won for Richardson's Pamela her promotion to the office of squire's lady, but the unrealities of the *Deserted Village*. That poem was not, indeed, quite what Crabbe thought it to be. Its pictures of the cottage furniture and the village school are just as accurate and as 'Dutch' as any of Crabbe's own, and they have, besides, the charm that springs from remembered happiness and from pensive good nature. To put them beside *The Village* is something like putting Chaucer beside Langland or Ben Jonson. There is the same natural wave-like movement of the words, the same open humour and freedom from the hindered, heavy tone of the responsible satirist. It is wonderful to see how Goldsmith softens the sharp edges of the rhetoric on which he was brought up. Crabbe took those decorative peasants too seriously; they are but figures in the composition. He sat down with a grim resolve to *visit* Auburn, and he reported on it like a sanitary inspector who is paid to know the worst. The village life is a 'life of pain'; the 'real picture of the poor' shall now be painted. 'Auburn and Eden can no more be found.' Accordingly he paints, or rather catalogues, the squalors of an actual village in a setting of barren landscape. What he really outdid and eclipsed was the picture, not of Auburn happy, but of Auburn desolate; because, instead of Goldsmith's sentiment and amateur economics, he gave the naked facts. 'Goldsmith's,' said one of Crabbe's friends in 1784, 'would now be the *deserted village*.' Through this, rather unfair, revulsion Crabbe discovered his real bent, and never again deserted it.

With more reason he girded at the romantic fiction of the hour. The authoress of *Northanger Abbey* may have been reading *Ellen Orford* when she said that she could 'fancy being Mrs. Crabbe.' In that poem the Louisas and Clemen-

tinas, who always just escape the ravisher, or who brave the moans and gibing sprites of Mrs. Radcliffe's castles, are capably derided. These

> females and their men
> Are but the creatures of the author's pen;
> Nay, creatures borrow'd and again convey'd
> From book to book—the shadows of a shade.

And the books themselves—*Louisa, or the Cottage on the Moor*, by a Mrs. Helme, or *Darnley Cottage*, by a Mrs. Bonhote, are only remembered through Crabbe's explanatory notes, which give us a glimpse of what young ladies read in the years before *Waverley*. Thus, too, his 'preceptor's wife,' whom her teacher schools so hard in English history, that she ends by thinking that the Revolution is identical with the Reformation, privately battens on *The Haunted Hall* and the *Confessions of a Nun*; and his Belinda Waters, in the tale bearing her name, is so surfeited on trash of the same kind that she cannot so much as finish *Clarissa*. To the taste for these works, and for Mrs. Radcliffe [1] and Lewis, Crabbe tried to furnish an antidote; but his own liking for ancient genuine romance, if unexpected, is clearly shown by the confessions of his *Old Bachelor*, who, for a nice but sound reason which may be fairly taken as the author's own, amuses himself with the Arthurian legends and Cervantes. He has, like Kent in *Lear*, 'years on his back forty-eight,'—he is too old to dream of being, as he had dreamed in his youth, a 'modern' hero of romance. About those elder worthies there can be no deception:

> But all the mighty deeds and matchless powers
> Of errant knights, we never fancied ours;
> And thus the progress of each gifted knight
> Must at all times create the same delight;
> Lovelace, a forward youth, might hope to seem,
> But Lancelot never—that he could not dream;
> Nothing reminds us in the magic page
> Of old romance, of our declining age;
> If once our fancy mighty dragons slew
> This is no more than fancy now can do;
> But when the heroes of a novel come,
> Conquer'd and conquering, to a drawing-room,
> We no more feel the vanity that sees
> Within ourselves what we admire in these,
> And so we leave the modern tale, to fly
> From realm to realm with Tristram and Sir Guy.

Crabbe's early kindness for 'Arabian Nights and Persian Tales,' for Robin Hood and Robinson Crusoe, and for Jane

Shore and Rosamond, comes out in his pleasant sketch *The Happy Day*. Peter, the schoolmaster's son, who is allowed to range over the great library at Silford Hall, has all that literature, as well as Esop and the tale of Giant Hickerthrift,[1] in his own store at home; as well as the *Monthly Magazine*, sixpence a number, with its extracts:

> Scraps cut from sermons, scenes removed from plays,
> With heads of heroes famed in Tyburn's palmy days.

In these he revelled, for

> Sir Walter wrote not then, nor He by whom
> Such gain and glory to Sir Walter come,
> That Fairy-Helper.

It was doubtless in the spirit of Peter, or of the Old Bachelor, that Crabbe himself liked the Waverley Novels when they came. His stay with Scott, in the year when George the Fourth came to Edinburgh, is the sprightliest incident in his grave life—passed, after a youth of hardship, in a series of obscure parsonages—and it is known to all through Lockhart. It is told also in the *Life* by Crabbe's son, one of the best, frankest, and discreetest of filial biographies. It is known, too, how Scott loved Crabbe's tales, and read them to the last—regarding their author, it may be, more as a fellow-novelist than as a fellow-poet.

VI

The rare sallies of Crabbe into romantic verse are remarkable. They are not in the fashion of *Marmion* or *Lara*, but in that of the *Lyrical Ballads*, whose occasional influence upon him seems traceable. *Sir Eustace Grey*, *The World of Dreams*, and *The Hall of Justice*, none of them printed earlier than 1805, are in fact 'lyrical ballads,' not novelettes in heroic couplet. The author has read Coleridge and Wordsworth, but rises to a high, nervous, passionate note of his own, which, had it failed and flagged less often, would have raised him nearer to their kingdom. One example may serve. Sir Eustace Grey, who is in a madhouse, after telling, in a sane and dispiriting style enough, the story of his wife's elopement, suddenly startles us by reciting how the 'ill-favoured Ones,' the demons of his delirium, bore his dispossessed spirit along sea and land, through fen and over precipice, and by the salt scents of the foreshore. Some of the stanzas are the finest in this peculiar order between *The Ancient Mariner* and *Ravelston*:

885-7
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At length a moment's sleep stole on,—
Again came my commission'd foes;
Again through sea and land we 're gone,
No peace, no respite, no repose:
Above the dark broad sea we rose,
We ran through bleak and frozen land;
I had no strength their strength t' oppose,
An infant in a giant's hand.

They placed me where those streamers play,
Those nimble beams of brilliant light;
It would the stoutest heart dismay,
To see, to feel, that dreadful sight:
So swift, so pure, so cold, so bright,
They pierced my frame with icy wound;
And all that half-year's polar night,
Those dancing streamers wrapp'd me round.

Here then, in a way quite foreign to his habit, and somewhat in the way of Coleridge, Crabbe lets himself go; and he also lets himself go, somewhat in the way of Wordsworth, in *The Sisters* (*Tales of the Hall*, bk. viii.):

That is the grave to Lucy shown,
The soil a pure and silver sand,
The green cold moss above it grown,
Unpluck'd of all but maiden hand:
In virgin earth, till then unturn'd,
There let my maiden form be laid,
Nor let my changèd clay be spurn'd,
Nor for new guest that bed be made.

But the regular tissue of his tales is quite different, as a chance passage from the same poem shows:

Jane laughed at all their visits and parade,
And call'd it friendship in a hot-house made;
A style of friendship suited to his taste,
Brought on and ripen'd, like his grapes, in haste;
She saw the wants that wealth in vain would hide,
And all the tricks and littleness of pride:
On all the wealth would creep the vulgar stain,
And grandeur strove to look itself in vain.

The contrast shows in what opposite fashion romance and realism work when a tale has to be told. The romantic imagination of Coleridge or Keats, or of Crabbe in these few pieces, evolves itself in a series of *liberating* touches. It is like a new butterfly or young bird which begins with weak gentle flights, but goes farther and higher every moment, and at last is out of sight of the ground where it could only crawl or struggle one way. We are left with the sense of freedom and release,

and, even if the subject be painful or tragic, of expansion and joy. We are bound by no laws but those of beauty and coherence and fidelity to the spirit of the dream, and the effect may be won by precision of outline—

> The soil a pure and silver sand;

or by the intimation of limitless space and movement—

> And all that half year's polar night
> Those dancing streamers wrapp'd me round.

Once, in his youth (1778), under the stress of want and melancholy, Crabbe for an instant had sung like Blake:

> Trembling and poor, I saw the light,
> New waking from unconscious night:
> Trembling and poor I still remain,
> To meet unconscious night again.

VII

But this is not the normal way of the imagination in such writers. They are bound to the fatalities of this earth, to the chainwork of real cause and effect, to expressiveness and not to beauty. Their fancy works by exclusion, not by expansion. They shut one door upon charm, and another upon freedom. Their scenery is grim and exact:

> The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
> Partake the nature of their fenny bed;
> Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
> Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume;
> Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septfoil harsh,
> And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh.

This is a tolerable allegory of the garden of Crabbe's own fancy. Such bitter landscapes are in harmony with the forlorn persons that haunt them, and with the seagulls that wheel about—

> While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
> Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
> And in the restless ocean dip for rest.

He relates his passages of the human comedy in much the same tone. He enjoys tracing frustrate lives and the slow degeneration of the soul. He notes the outward obstructions and inward faintings of ordinary men or women, who at last appear to us, in Hamlet's phrase, either as *lapsed in time and passion*, like half the persons over fifty whom we encounter, or as

winning, at the utmost, some such tempered grey happiness or relative success as fall to the lot of the other half. Most of his tales are of this complexion; they are such as we hear every day, and they leave in the memory that sediment of regret without surprise which of all feelings is the least accessible and the most exasperating to youth. For youth, or for a young forward-looking epoch—for his own epoch—Crabbe did not write. In 1820, he was a stranger, save in his rarer moods, and a chance survivor; and that is why, beside Byron or Coleridge, he and his style are so instructive. Both orders of style are good, and art and thought are incomplete without them both. Indeed, they are apt to recur in a curious rhythm, one overlapping the other, and of this rhythm a great deal of inventive literature is made up; as we see by confronting the first part of the *Romance of the Rose* with the second, or *The Winter's Tale* with *Volpone*. We have to denote these contrasting modes of art by such rough terms as romantic and realistic. But, while both are good, the after-world, which is always young and not middle-aged, finds a nobler nourishment in the freer and happier kind of creation; which is therefore safe, and needs no rescuing; while criticism has always to be rescuing the other kind, of which Crabbe is a master, and to be pleading that this also is of the kingdom. We shall, however, see that his temper softened, and his sense of beauty grew keener, with years; and that without any sacrifice of force.

Crabbe's art has a definite progress of its own. He forced his way out of the empty, rancid invective of the school of Churchill. He advanced from the general to the concrete, from tirades like *Inebriety*, through the vigorous commonplace, barely enlivened by a few vivid strokes, of *The Library* (1781), to descriptions like those of *The Village*. But in *The Village* he is trying to depict real life in half-real language. The Poor and the Great, Sloth and Danger, the finny tribe, the deluded fair, and the stout churl with his teeming mate, are still queerly obtrusive amidst the literal, thudding diction which Crabbe was to retain and shape so aptly. But he can already trace a scene or a silhouette; and the excellent sketch of his hunting parson, who fights shy of pauper deathbeds, is perhaps provoked by Goldsmith's idyll. Still he cannot yet model an individual portrait, or invent a situation, or tell a story; *The Newspaper* (1785) shows no advance; and at this point he pauses for twenty-two years, improving his art in silence, curbing the desire to publish, burnishing and rejecting. When

he produces *The Parish Register* and *The Borough*, it is plain that he has not altered, but only bettered, his methods, and that he is still doing an eighteenth-century thing in an eighteenth-century way. The tune is finer, but it is played on the old instrument. His portraits are now those of a master, but they are of the type already made classical by Dryden and Pope; only the social scene is changed, and people are called by their names—instead of Shimei and Chloe, Jacob Holmes and Peter Grimes. They are drawn generally 'from the order of society placed between the humble and the great.' In the Preface to the *Tales* (1812), Crabbe appeals formally to the shades of his poetic ancestors to warrant this method—the 'fair representation of existing character'—and expresses his willingness 'to find some comfort in his expulsion from the rank and society of Poets, by reflecting that men much his superiors are likewise cut out.' But he can now exhibit a situation and a scene, as well as draw a 'character.' He has qualified his satiric bias, and desires, not, indeed, to 'adopt the notions of pastoral simplicity,' but to embody 'more natural views of the peasantry, considered as a mixed body of persons . . . contented or miserable.' He has also begun to find his ultimate and characteristic form of the Tale, which is sometimes a mere anecdote, but in its fullest development is a fore-shortened and dramatic life-history. He considers it as a kind of petty epic, with a 'regular succession of events, and a catastrophe to which every incident should be subservient, and which every character, in a greater or less degree, should conspire to accomplish.' But instead of expanding this framework, and writing a long novel in verse, of epic length, as his reviewers told him to do, he wisely kept his tales short, and tried to brace them together into a larger unity by some 'associating circumstance,' after the manner of Chaucer and Boccaccio. Yet this effort he found a strain. *The Parish Register* is artificially assorted under baptisms, marriages, and burials; and in *The Borough* the wish to be doggedly exhaustive hurts the performance. It is a survey of Aldborough, done from memory, with trades, clubs, almshouses, inns, and elections all painfully gazetted. He describes jelly-fish, and the 'various tribes and species of marine vermes,' in verse which Gifford hailed as 'pleasing and *éveillé*,' but which is as glossy and repugnant as Erasmus Darwin's. Also he discourses on preparatory schools, and on the 'mode of paying the borough minister.' For these misdeeds his excuse is their 'variety'; but it is only a variety of tedium. Crabbe has

dropped the tedium of rhetoric, only to inflict the tedium of fact. But in both poems there are wonderful acrid landscapes, and little tragic biographies, and rasping satire as of old, and of dramatic action and suspense not a little. The easy, lazy, popular vicar is described with a distant, half-scornful good-temper, if not very grammatically:

> Mothers approved a safe contented guest,
> And daughters one who backed each small request:
> In him his flock found nothing to condemn;
> Him sectaries liked, he never troubled them;
> No trifles failed his yielding mind to please,
> And all his passions sunk in early ease;
> Nor one so old has left this world of sin
> More like the being that he enter'd in.

But when Crabbe comes to the chronicle of Peter Grimes, the murderer of his prentices, or of Clelia the coquette, who ends her days in the almshouse, he is on his final ground; and his power of working out the slow fatal mutations of ordinary character approves him by far the greatest novelist of the positive order between Sterne and Scott. For he favours the old scheme of tragedy, which Dante describes as beginning cheerfully, while its ending is *fœtida et horribilis*. His habit, too, is to build on real characters and stories, and to dwell on, perhaps to exaggerate,[1] their grievous endings. He enjoys his own vigour and rancour in developing such a scheme. He likes, too, the form of the *Progress*, as practised by Hogarth or Lillo in the preceding age. The Progress is a tragical tract in artistic form, showing in definite stages the punishment, or self-punishment, of a vice or a foible. The decline of Clelia is demonstrated at halting-points of ten years, which affect us like a Hogarthian series. No one can sum them up more aptly than Jeffrey, whose notes on Crabbe are amongst the best things that he did, and are also amongst the best things ever written on Crabbe:

> She began life as a sprightly, talking, flirting girl, who passed for a wit and a beauty in the half-bred circle of the Borough, and who, in laying herself out to entrap a youth of distinction, unfortunately fell a victim to his superior art, and forfeited her place in society. She then became the smart mistress of a dashing attorney—then tried to teach a school—lived as the favourite of an innkeeper—let lodgings—wrote novels—set up a toyshop—and, finally, was admitted into the Almshouse. There is nothing very interesting, perhaps, in such a story; but the details of it show the wonderful accuracy of the author's observation of character.

In his studies of crime, of which Crabbe is a keen observer, this curious habit of marking out uniform stages is carried into detail. It is unlike the free, continuous style of Balzac or the great dramatists, but it is very lucid. Jachin, the parish clerk, who is nervous at first, but soon robs the offertory regularly, seems to slip one stair downward towards Avernus with each succeeding couplet:

> But custom sooth'd him—ere a single year
> All this was done without restraint or fear:
> Cool and collected, easy and composed,
> He was correct till all the service closed;
> Then to his home, without a groan or sign,
> Gravely he went, and laid his treasure by.

Jachin is found out, but not prosecuted; he is dismissed, and wastes in a remorse of which the phases are sharply marked; and the mud-bank and the marsh-dyke are the right background for 'the strong yearnings of a ruin'd mind.' Crabbe here dwells with gusto upon the successful onset of mean temptation; in *Peter Grimes* he is engrossed with the gradual breakdown of the brain under the delirium of fruitless repentance. The spirits of the slaughtered boys rise up before Grimes, each at the fatal spot in the river. They call him with 'weak, sad voices,' and amidst them stands his own father, whom he had one day struck down though not actually knifed:

> 'He cried for mercy, which I kindly gave,
> But he has no compassion in his grave.'

This couplet, singled out by Ruskin, shows a higher reach of Crabbe's art than his usual symmetrical analysis. Now and then, not often, he has the Jacobean power of tragic thrust.

VIII

After *The Borough* he settled down to writing stories for the rest of his life. There are more than sixty of them in all. Besides the *Tales* and the *Tales of the Hall*, there are the *Posthumous Tales*. In the Preface of 1812 the poet defends his principles at length. He says in effect that his works are not the less poems because they do not answer to the description by Shakespeare's Theseus of 'the forms of things unknown,' which are 'bodied forth' by the imagination. We should all now admit his plea that everything depends 'on the manner in which the poem itself is conducted.' Few men have ever hit off their own style in a sentence of such precision as the

following: 'Pope himself has no small portion of this actuality of relation, this nudity of description, and poetry without an atmosphere.' 'Poetry without an atmosphere' is indeed the schedule into which a whole family of writers, too roughly denoted, we have seen, as realistic, falls. If Prosper Mérimée or Daniel Defoe had written tales in verse, it would have applied to them; and it does apply to much of the dramatic verse of Ben Jonson, to the *Trivia* of Gay, and to Crabbe himself. Language, in work of this order, calls up nothing but its overt meaning and explicit point; it does not set us dreaming, it has no halo or penumbra, it does not glance from earth to heaven. The edges of every image are clear and achromatic. The fancy is pinned to the object, and there is nothing else in the field. The oceanic murmur of human life, around and beyond the persons immediately speaking, is unheard. The glory of this sort of writing is its patient veracity and solidity of thought, and its correspondence with vehement real life. It expresses a single mood of the plastic genius—the mood in which we gladly barter a hundred *Alastors* for one *Ellen Orford*;—and then we tire, and then go back again to dreams. But meanwhile it is this quality that keeps Crabbe alive and keeps him right, for he has the true style for it, the true 'actuality of relation' and 'nudity of description.' In his tragic poems he does not open infinite chasms like Shakespeare; we go down far, but we touch solid bottom in the darkness. The fall is into a mine, not into space or the unsounded sea. Instead of Iago's line,

> From this time forth I never will speak word,

or de Flores', in Middleton's *Changeling*—

> A woman dipp'd in blood, and talk of modesty!

we have—

> And he, the man that should have taught the soul,
> Wish'd but the body in his base control.

It was this difference of kind which the early reviewers forgot when they celebrated Crabbe as a master of the highest tragedy. We may be sure that he knew better himself. They were nearer the mark when they noted 'his extraordinary powers of giving pain,' and, they might have added, his extraordinary pleasure in giving and realising pain. He retains this saturnine gift unimpaired to the last, because he seldom exaggerates or overreaches himself, like Charles Dickens or Victor Hugo when they try to be dreadful. There are no Jonas Chuzzlewits in Crabbe; nor has he, on the other hand,

a shred of the imagination that can body forth a Quilp or a Quasimodo.

The sixty tales do not show much change in scope or spirit, unless it be the invasion of a milder, gentler cynicism, and the appearance of a surer style, as the poet ages. The *Tales of the Hall* are 'told in the after-dinner *tête-à-têtes* that take place in that time between the worthy brothers over their bottle'; the brothers themselves, George and Richard, being drawn with a more Addisonian humour than of old; for 'the crab-apple,' as it has been said, 'had ripened.' And when the tales are over, the rich bachelor, the elder brother, suddenly endows the younger, the family man, with a 'sweet farm and neat mansion,' as in some scrambled-up benevolent ending of Dickens or of Eugene Sue. The true test of a satirist, or realist, is when he turns to idyll to indemnify himself; for if he does not, like M. Zola, become at once unreal or sentimental, he renews our confidence. Crabbe sometimes survives this test, though hardly in the close of the *Tales of the Hall*. Still, some of his themes, as in *The Natural Death of Love*—'Love dies all kinds of death,' as Crabbe well observes—and in *Smugglers and Poachers*, are as drastic as ever. The latter story was suggested by Romilly, and has a more dramatic build than usual. There is stuff in it for a whole novel, and we can fancy it in the hands of Mr. Thomas Hardy. There are two brothers, one a poacher, one a gamekeeper, rivals in love. Rachel buys the life of the poacher—who is in prison, and whom she loves—by marrying the gamekeeper, whom she does not love. She has an interview in the prison, which Jeffrey says 'will almost bear a comparison' with that of Isabella with Claudio. This is just what it will not bear, although Crabbe's verbal echoes show that he has the scene in mind. If we can forget Claudio, the poacher Robert is admirable. He, too, reasons himself into accepting the bargain; and Rachel's bearing is deeply imagined:

> 'Go, and be his—but love him not, be sure—
> Go, love him not,—and I will life endure:
> He, too, is mortal!'—Rachel deeply sigh'd,
> But would no more converse: she had complied,
> And was no longer free—she was his brother's bride.
>
> 'Farewell!' she said, with kindness, but not fond,
> Feeling the pressure of the recent bond,
> And put her tenderness apart to give
> Advice to one who so desired to live:
> She then departed, join'd the attending guide,
> Reflected—wept—was sad—was satisfied.

The poacher is released, but relapses; and on a wild roaring night the brothers meet and shoot each other in the dark wood. Rachel now loves her husband, and pities his brother, and sleeps uneasily:

> More than one hour she thought, and, dropping then
> In sudden sleep, cried loudly, 'Spare him, men!
> And do no murder!'—then awaked she rose,
> And thought no more of trying for repose.

Rachel's wanderings in the wood, and the picture of moon, cloud, and storm in the fratricidal night-scene, excel anything else of the same kind in Crabbe; there is no lack of 'atmosphere' in poetry like this, and the internal rhymes and assonances help the effect:

> The moon was risen, and she sometimes shone
> Through thick white clouds, that flew tumultuous on,
> Passing beneath her with an eagle's speed,
> That her soft light imprison'd and then freed:
> The fitful glimmering through the hedgerow green
> Gave a strange beauty to the changing scene;
> And roaring winds and rushing waters lent
> Their mingled voice that to the spirit went.

Rachel lives on, but she looks on at the affairs of men as men look upon the games of children. As to the world,

> It cannot longer pain her, longer please.

Many of the tales are not tragedies, but comedies of manners, told with a kind of savage good humour, and turning on the tiny caste distinctions that are still so fierce and inveterate amongst the humbler classes in England. Such is *Danvers and Rayner*. The heads of these two tradesman families are at first friends, as the world goes; friends, because neighbours and equals. A sober and convenient friendship of the kind will stand an ordinary shower; it is 'cloth of frieze, not cloth of gold'; it is 'a good useful coat, and nothing more.' Danvers comes into money and moves into a House, or Hall. His son Richard, betrothed to Phœbe Rayner, is firm and honourable, but Crabbe traces with his customary relish the 'natural death of love.'

> Yet not indifferent was our Lover grown,
> Although the ardour of the flame was flown;
> He still of Phœbe thought, her lip, her smile,
> But grew contented with his fate the while.

Old Rayner, who has come down in the world, is invited with his family to visit the Hall. Jane Austen would have delighted,

had she lived to read this posthumous story, in the scene where Rayner tries to broach the topic of a loan, while Danvers seems too absorbed in pointing out his possessions to listen. Richard, still faithful, goes to see the Rayners, and finds them the worse for their drop in their fortunes. They have become noisy; and 'our incomparable Dutch painter' revels in describing their evening at home:

> Meantime there rose, amid the ceaseless din,
> A mingled scent, that crowded room within;
> Rum and red-herring, Cheshire cheese and gin,
> Pipes, too, and punch, and sausages, and tea,
> Were things that Richard was disturbed to see.

He is more disturbed to find Phœbe dallying with a strange sailor in the street; but he pulls himself together, and bids her 'a calm good-night.' 'And home'—so the tale ends—

> And home turn'd Phœbe—in due time to grace
> A tottering cabin and a tatter'd race.

Crabbe is perhaps more convincing in his tragi-comedies than in his tragedies. They are just as lifelike; and the professional moralist does not find his work so easy in a story like *William Bailey*. Fanny, William's betrothed, is led astray by the conventional young lord, and for a while thinks she is happy. The letter which she writes to her parents is one of the many evidences that Crabbe's sense of beauty and skill in natural pathos increased in his later life.

> True that she lived in pleasure and delight,
> But often dream'd and saw the farm by night;—
> The boarded room that she had kept so neat,
> And all her roses in the window-seat;—
> The pear-tree shade, the jasmine's lovely gloom,
> With its long twigs that blossom'd in the room;
> But she was happy, and the tears that fell
> As she was writing had no grief to tell;
> We weep when we are glad, we sigh when we are well.

The parents die; William, the lover, wanders nine years; he too wishes to die, and 'the shady lane, broad heath, and starry sky' fail to comfort him—though Wordsworth, unlike Crabbe, might have forced them to do so. He commences Methodist, and finds himself one day in a village inn. The hostess, a widow, is reading a hymn-book, and shows emotion at the sight of William, who, like Troilus in Henryson's poem, sees in her something that reminds him of his old love. But the lady is not at all like the beggar Cressida. She is cheerful

and comfortable, and, after a little fencing, in which she feigns to be a stranger, she owns to being Fanny herself. The ending is in Crabbe's regular key:

> This pair, our host and hostess of the Fleece,
> Command some wealth, and smile at its increase;
> Saving and civil, cautious and discreet,
> All sects and parties in their mansion meet; . . .
> There meet the wardens at their annual feast,
> With annual pun—'the parish must be fleeced.' . . .
> So live the pair—and life's disasters seem
> In their unruffled calm a troubled dream.

It is, we may suppose, to be regarded as a happy ending when the sufferers forget the interesting part of their lives, and are dismissed with this gentle playfulness. There is, however, some irony in such an ending, of which Crabbe seems well aware. This irony is well suited to a tale, but in a drama it would be an anti-climax.

IX

Such are a few of Crabbe's narratives. Their variety is somewhat concealed by the style in which they are told. The history of that style, which is not so monotonous as it seems at first, is straightforward enough. Allowing for a few excursions, he remained throughout 'classical' in his form. He slowly escaped from the fetters of the classical verbiage. He never, indeed, quite escaped, but then he never had been quite enslaved. From the first he has a habit of swinging his moralist's ferule vaguely in the air, and then suddenly letting it whistle down on a concrete pair of shoulders:

> Bland adulation! other pleasures pall
> On the sick taste, and transient are they all;
> But this one sweet has such enchanting power,
> The more we take, the faster we devour:
> Nauseous to those who must the dose apply,
> And most disgusting to the standers-by.

This might have been written by anybody of Crabbe's generation, but his peculiar, clumsy, efficient stroke is heard at once:

> Yet in all companies will Laughton feed,
> Nor care how grossly men perform the deed.

It was not, however, for his acres of declamation that Crabbe was mocked in *Rejected Addresses*, but for the dead prosaic minuteness, of which there are acres also. It is needless to quote James or Horace Smith, for Crabbe is often his own

parodist. He was always ready to write 'meanly,' in a kind of rhyming prose, where not the prose but the rhyme seems to be the intruder. He could write—

> Mamma look'd on with thoughts to these allied;
> She felt the pleasure of reflected pride;

Or even thus—

> But how will Bloomer act
> When he becomes acquainted with the fact?

Much of the meanness of such passages is due to their thick and lumbering rhymes. *Act, fact; all, scrawl; aunt, grant; flood, mud!* The whole weight of a couplet lies upon its rhymes, and Crabbe does not mind making the worst of them. In defence of such practices, and of his general fen-like level, he might have said that his business was to reproduce the flat encumbered talk of common folk, and that to have quitted verse for prose would have been to resign half his power. Such a plea does not make the passages more lively. But after all he is an artist. FitzGerald and other admirers, distressed by his inequalities, have tried to make anthologies. But his work that is worth keeping would fill a big anthology, and it is better to take him wholesale. Without essentially altering his narrative style, he cleared and purged it. He stretched and adjusted the familiar couplet with singular address to his chosen purpose, nor has it ever again been used so well for that purpose. Our bourgeois fiction has been written in prose instead, not wholly to its gain. Perhaps *Middlemarch*, cast into form like his, would have had a better chance of permanence. The narratives in blank verse of *The Excursion* are more liable to be dull than Crabbe's heroics, to which dialogue and monologue are much better fitted. The motion is sometimes that of a springless cart, but the ground is covered quicker than might be feared. After a time the sensation is pleasant, and we can watch the life of the roadside and the inn-parlour.

The hardest task of Crabbe was to manage the speeches of his prosaic *dramatis personæ* in a medium so full of rhetorical associations.[1] We can trace the increase of his skill. In *The Village* he resembles a professional letter-writer who puts fine language into the mouths of the inarticulate. His old shepherd, for example, perorates most disastrously, like somebody in Dryden's heroic plays:

> I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,
> Nipt by the frost, and shivering in the wind;

There it abides till younger buds come on;
As I, now all my fellow-swains are gone.
Then, from the rising generation thrust,
It falls, like me, unnoticed in the dust.

After a while this kind of talk gives way to another one, much more subtly modulated to the tones of actual prosaic speech, and yet not out of place in rhyme. In the scathing story of *The Brothers*, Isaac, the elder, under the pressure of a stingy wife, edges the younger one, an old sailor who is down in the world, into the worst room of the house, and finally begs him to 'go up on the loft.' The effect is aided by the poet's care in the detail of punctuation and printing.

'Ah, brother Isaac!—What! I 'm in the way!'
'No, on my credit, look ye, No! but I
Am fond of peace, and my repose must buy
On any terms—in short, we must comply:
My spouse had money—she must have her will—
Ah! Brother—marriage is a bitter pill':

George tried the lady—'Sister, I offend.'
'Me?' she replied—'Oh no! you may depend
On my regard—but watch your Brother's way,
Whom I, like you, must study and obey.'

Crabbe's versification likewise grew in freedom, though he remained faithful to his distich. In his handling of it, he remembers the finish and balance of Pope, but aspires to the nobler sweep of Dryden, freely using the triple rhymes and alexandrines. His lines are more continuous than Pope's, and in their overrunning and interlacing come to resemble what Johnson, speaking of *The Hind and Panther*, calls Dryden's 'deliberate and final scheme' of verse. Only Crabbe goes further still, since he has to forge a rhythm that accords with natural domestic talk. He is therefore the last great writer of the couplet in its 'classical' form. Its later uses by Keats and William Morris for romantic narrative are coloured by memories of the Jacobeans and of Chaucer. Nothing could be more skilful technically, or better done, than some lines from *Procrastination*. Dinah has waited many years for her absent lover Rupert, but has become meanwhile rich, avaricious, and sanctimonious. He returns, poor as he went, to claim her, and she rebuffs him.

She ceased;—with steady glance, as if to see
The very root of this hypocrisy,—
He her small fingers moulded in his hard
And bronzed broad hand; then told her his regard,

His best respect were gone, but love had still
Hold in his heart, and govern'd yet the will—
Or he would curse her:—saying this, he threw
The hand in scorn away, and bade adieu
To every lingering hope, with every care in view.

A plain style, but inimitable; the verse follows every wave of the wanderer's disgust and chagrin. Now and then, in higher mood, Crabbe escapes still more thoroughly from the bonds of his metrical tradition; and we could almost believe that some lines he wrote in 1817 or 1818 were shaped after reading Keats, whose *Endymion* came out in the spring of the latter year:

He chose his native village, and the hill
He climb'd a boy had its attraction still;
With that small brook beneath, where he would stand
And stooping fill the hollow of his hand
To quench th' impatient thirst—then stop awhile
To see the sun upon the waters smile,
In that sweet weariness, when, long denied,
We drink and view the fountain that supplied
The sparkling bliss, and feel, if not express,
Our perfect ease in that sweet weariness.

Crabbe is one of the poets whose day has declined and who are spoken of with distant respect. But his day may ripen again, in Wordsworth's phrase, 'into a steady morning.' He did not always see why poetry should be pleasant; but he did want poetry to be a means of representing life, and his verse beats into us the impression of life, and of his own faithful and brooding spirit; and, sometimes, also, of beauty.

X

It may be convenient here to glance back at the critical champion of the old school. In his later years Johnson applauded the first satires of Cowper, and the first sketches of Crabbe, for they seemed to give a new lease of power to the dying style which he understood and had himself practised. It is a mark of our classical poets that their professed defenders —not only Johnson, but Jeffrey and Byron—outlived their day of power. It was otherwise in France, where Malherbe and Boileau preceded their own school, and were taken at their own valuation as its doctors. The *Lives of the Poets* were finished in 1781, and are the ripe and final judgments passed by the classical age upon itself. They are, indeed, not idolatrous judgments; for Johnson's independence and mother-wit suggest many reserves; and the poets who come within

his pale are nicely balanced, according to their own canons, against one another; but within those canons Johnson generally moves, so that his general attitude to Pope or Dryden is a filial one. What he would have made of *Songs of Experience* or of *Christabel*, we can partly guess from his dealings with Gray's *Odes* and *Lycidas*. But it would have been of interest to hear the concession that his real, his stifled, his underestimated sense for the greater poetry would have drawn from him; we come on that sense when he speaks of *L'Allegro* or of *The Castle of Indolence*; on which he wrote, as perhaps he might have written of *Kubla Khan*: 'It opens a scene of lazy luxury, that fills the imagination.' But we cannot tell, for most of the poets whom he reviews were chosen not by himself but by the booksellers, and Chatterton was not among them. Nor is it certain that he knew the *Song to David*, when he slighted the poetry of its author. The *English Bards* of his admirer, Byron, he would probably have condemned, and rightly, as crude in its own kind. He remains, 'raying out curious observations to the last,' greater than his superstitions, far greater than his books or even than his talk, not to be packed into any formula which serves him up as a mere Tory or apostle of common sense; but still in the last resort a force, a temperament, a 'character' rather than an artist. He has been the victim of phrases that are still current concerning him. The 'sturdy old moralist' was so close to the hard facts of life and death that he played freely enough with ethical conventions. The 'prejudiced Tory' had the soul of a democrat when he had to deal with Chesterfield. The 'preacher of common sense' was a mystic, of his own kind, and a hypochondriac. It is a pleasure to go back to him after reading the madder parts of Blake, or the more unctuous pages of Coleridge. He had the noblest and most penetrating of all tributes from Carlyle, who fixed rightly for praise on his virility and his heroic quality.

Still the reviewer of the age that followed Johnson must perforce leave him aside, after thus much notice paid; for in the development of its art and spirit he does not count, and to attend too much to him will only blind us to the antecedents of that development in Johnson's own time, to which Johnson was blind or hostile. For, unlike Burke, he did not even connect himself with the next age by becoming a voice of the reaction against its revolutionary impulses. He did not live long enough for that, nor had he the requisite kind of power. The feeling for beauty was what the classical poets, of the strictest sect, wanted. Pope had it, but came fatally to

lose it. Johnson, Churchill, and the political satirists have it not at all. Goldsmith, who uses a variety of the same technique, has a true feeling for beauty, though it is hindered in expression by his technique. He has not very keen artistic senses, saving in some of his water-colour scenes, but he has the gentleness and charm that his contemporaries lack. This gentleness and charm sometimes make him unreal, in the way that Crabbe resented; but they save him all the same. Goldsmith has a just, sane vision, after all, of country life, with its slow changes and innocent humours; and when he describes it, and quits the abstract-sentimental, his diction becomes right and simple.

> And, 'mid his old hereditary trees,
> Trees he has climbed so oft, he sits and sees
> His children's children playing round his knees:
> Then happiest, youngest, when the quoit is flung,
> When, side by side, the archers' bows are strung;
> His to prescribe the place, adjudge the prize. . . .

The reader will not find these lines anywhere in Goldsmith, for they occur in Samuel Rogers's[1] *Human Life* (1819); but Rogers is here speaking in the tones of Goldsmith, from whom, as a poet, he derives, and whom, as well as Gray and Beattie, he studied carefully. Both *Human Life* and the much earlier *Pleasures of Memory* (1792) have the same kind of atmosphere, the same drawbacks and recompenses, as *The Deserted Village*, though they are far less vivid. In this way Rogers carries on, with a kind of humane elegance, the happier species of classical tradition, alongside of the hoarse railing of the satirists. He began to write before Gifford, and lived to see the publication of *Maud*; but in his verse he remained true to his upbringing. He does not count for much as a poet, and knew it; he has the wish rather than the power to be one, and possesses taste, the *feminine* of talent.

Rogers was a connoisseur who took to verse-making, and wrote with patient though somewhat ineffectual care. *The Pleasures of Memory* took him many years to make, and yet it is only a recital of pleasant things remembered, and has no unity. It is abstract, as its title shows; a weakness shared by Akenside and Campbell; for Imagination, Memory, Hope, and their 'pleasures,' cannot give backbone to a poem. The exiled Tahitian remembers his hut, the young Foscari remembers Venice:

> And hence the charm historic scenes impart;
> Hence Tiber awes, and Avon melts the heart.

This is no real subject. The pleasant, glossy workmanship does not wear well, save in lines and brief passages. Rogers's *Epistle to a Friend* (1798) and *Voyage of Columbus* (1810) have the same ring and metre; but *Italy*, of which the first part appeared in 1822, is in blank verse of a kind that betrays new influences, especially that of Wordsworth, mingling with the old. A second part, signed, came in 1828; and both parts were issued again after much polishing. *Italy*, in its final appearance, is a work of art in the visible sense, like Rogers's collected *Poems* (1838). Both books are perfect in aspect and printing, and in the taste with which the steel engravings from Turner, Stothard, or Prout are set upon the page. *Italy* is a poem of travel and association, or rather a series of *Reise-bilder*. It is written from scene to scene, and from allusion to allusion, which are studiously sewn together. The picture of Marguerite of Tours (which has a breath of *The Excursion*), the story of the Foscari, the pictures of Arquà and Naples, perhaps show Rogers at his best; with the well-known lines on Venice, which after all are better grammar and verse than Byron's in *Childe Harold*. The aim of Rogers is now that of Southey and Wordsworth—purity and simplicity of diction; the old rhetoric is mostly purged away; and this aim he reaches, though he has not poetic energy to sustain him. His confession, a true one, gives the keynote of such a style:

> Nature denied him much,
> But gave him at his birth what most he values;
> A passionate love for music, sculpture, painting,
> For poetry, the language of the gods,
> For all things here, or grand or beautiful,
> A setting sun, a lake among the mountains,
> The light of an ingenuous countenance,
> And, what transcends them all, a noble action.

Flat enough, in its sincerity. The mistake of Rogers was not to write more prose. The little anecdote inserted in *Italy*, 'The Bag of Gold,' and passages in his letters, show how lively he could be, and so do the records of his talk.

Many causes contributed to make Rogers a personage, and in a chronicle of literary society his name would bulk large. He lived till past ninety (1763-1855), and was a name and an institution through two or three generations. The 'pleasures of memory' were certainly his. His wealth, his kindness, his hospitalities, and his love of art and of collecting gave him his prominence. As a writer, he spoke agreeably to the slow-marching, modish taste of the leisured classes,

who were carried away by Moore and Byron, but distrusted or were indifferent to Coleridge and Shelley, and who, in their ordinary moods, preferred the kind of passive pleasure that the verse of *Italy* afforded. His sharp odd wit was licensed, and to the high Whig company, of which Moore's diary is the mirror, Rogers was long indispensable. He figures in the gallery of Carlyle, with his 'sardonic shelf chin'; but in the history of poetry he belongs essentially to an earlier day.

No one knew so many people as Rogers, or remembered so much. He was the correspondent of Wordsworth, Scott, and Byron, and familiar with Brougham and the whole Whig circle. He seems to touch the surface of London society at every point. Living till ninety, he became himself a piece of history, a walking book of memoirs. He recalled faces that already flitted like wraiths over the tarnished mirror of the literary dictionaries. He had seen the Gordon riots,[1] and heads on Temple Bar, and young girls carted to Tyburn. He had heard Burke congratulate Reynolds, after one of his Academy lectures, in a quotation from Milton, and the Della Cruscans chattering literature (*ante*, p. 35) to Miss Helen Maria Williams. In Edinburgh he had talked with Blair, Robertson, and Adam Smith. Dr. Parr had written him a letter of comments on *The Pleasures of Memory*, and Gilpin, to whose judicious love for the picturesque he responded with a platonic affection for nature, had written him one also. He liked Mackintosh, but was bored by his metaphysical talk. His *Recollections* cover a whole age, and he lived through it, as patriarchs often do, without understanding its deeper currents in the least. He has not the intellectual receptiveness of Crabb Robinson; he is all anecdotes, bitter tongue, and benevolence, but cannot paint a portrait either physical or mental. Yet, with Moore, he was the most social of all the men of letters, and he was just a wit and poet, or less, and was near many wits and poets, and lived and died in the odour of literature.

XI

In a time of poetic change, the passage from the older themes and styles into the new is best seen in the writers of middle rank and mixed performance. For it is they that struggle against both the old and the new in turn; their voices are not quite their own, yet are not merely echoes; they are a little, but not too much, ahead of average cultured taste, and they content it greatly, and distract it from uneasiness in the

presence of the solitary genius that disregards it. In happy hour they may break away from their own canons and their admired official manner, and produce some short thing of a truer quality. Such a poet is Thomas Campbell[1] (1777-1844), a man of genuine if unrealised talent and of prolonged note and prominence, who won early fame by *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799). The state of public appreciation in the year after *Lyrical Ballads* can be measured by the reception of this poem, one of the last of any worth written in the didactic couplet. Its traditional kind of title, recalling Akenside and Rogers, is a mere formula, serving to cloak a number of disunited episodes; and the whole may be described as 'poetry rejoicing in abstractions.' The language and verse have much of the smoothness, or *nap*, which Rogers and Darwin strove to attain; but there are also ardours, and generosities, and rushes, to which the style is inadequate; and we are not surprised when Campbell afterwards finds his power in lyric. He is a fervent admirer of the Revolution, and never wholly cools down into the Whiggery of his friends and set. He is full of sympathy with Poland, and with oppressed slaves; and his oratory is sincere and at times potent. Ten years later came another long poem, *Gertrude of Wyoming*, conventional in manner, and obvious rather than false in its pathos; the subject is a tribute to the growing taste for exotic scenery; and the story is related in fluent Spenserian stanzas of the rhetorical kind.

Campbell's short poems and ballads date from various periods; *Ye Mariners of England*, *The Battle of the Baltic*, and *Hohenlinden* were inspired by his visit to Germany (1802), where he was near the smell of powder. *Lochiel's Warning* and *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, *Glenara* and *The Exile of Erin* and *O'Connor's Child*, are of scattered dates; but his best lyrics, like Wordsworth's, were all composed by 1806. Their diction is often less pure than Scott's, but they have at times a ring as of bronze; a metrical passion that carries them through even when the diction will not bear scrutiny. In *The Battle of the Baltic*, for instance, three out of the eight stanzas are spoilt by false expression; the third, by 'the might of England flushed'; the sixth, by 'death withdrew his shades'; and the last, by the condolence of the mermaid. But all this is retrieved by the alternating crash and suspense of the lines. Campbell's verse is 'popular,' in the same sense as Scott's; there are broad easy transitions, feelings that go home and need no curious explanation, unmistakable trumpet-

notes or drum-taps. This is an admirable style when it succeeds, but few can handle it and yet remain poets. Campbell is one of those few. His pathos is of the same order, palpable and unshaded, but it is there. Moore has the same power of going home to us; but his hand is finer, and he succeeds in pure lyric, not in the lyric of situation or story. Campbell's *Song of the Greeks*, with the shattering sound of its anapæstics, is now too little remembered; at the other extreme, *The Beech Tree's Petition*, with its old-fashioned Cowper-like grace and tenderness, and the *Lines written on Revisiting a Scene in Argyleshire*, which are both heroic and pathetic, remain with us out of a mass of verses devoid of character.

It was ill for Campbell that he resisted the new poetry with so much prejudice, and refused to learn from it, though he lived for nearly half a century after its rise. He was a man of talent, but he would not listen. It is much the same with his criticism, which is found in his *Essay on British Poetry*, and in the notices of the British poets prefixed to his *Specimens* (1819), and also in his *Lectures on Poetry*. He has many flashes of sensibility, little real sense of values; and an attempt to speak for posterity, which dwelt on Langhorne and Mason, omitted the masterpiece of Smart, and praised in Chatterton not his imagery, but his strength of 'moral portraiture,' is now curious reading. His notes on the old masters show the same mixture of feeling and blankness; but he was the first to attempt, however summarily, the whole survey from Chaucer to Burns, and he dotted in the names over a larger map than that sketched by Warton or Johnson, or even by Coleridge and Lamb. He spoke of Spenser as aptly as any of these judges:

> We shall nowhere find more airy and expansive images of visionary things, a sweeter tone of sentiment, or a finer flush in the colours of language. . . . The clouds of his allegory may seem to spread into shapeless forms, but they are still the clouds of a glowing atmosphere. Though his story grows desultory, the sweetness and grace of his manner still abide by him. . . . We always rise from perusing him with melody in the mind's ear, and with pictures of romantic beauty impressed on the imagination.

He compares equally well with the romantic critics when he touches on Jonson and Massinger. The digression, in his chapter on Pope, on the launching of a ship of the line, is prose in full official uniform, rather too new and conscious, and has the same inspiration as his best odes; its sincerity as well as its defects remind us of them. It is not often quoted now:

Of that spectacle I can never forget the impression, and of having witnessed it reflected from the faces of ten thousand spectators. They seem yet before me—I sympathise with their deep and silent expectation, and with their final burst of enthusiasm. It was not a vulgar joy, but an affecting national solemnity. When the vast bulwark sprang from her cradle, the calm water on which she swung majestically round gave the imagination a contrast of the stormy element on which she was soon to ride. All the days of battle and all the nights of danger which she had to encounter; all the ends of the earth which she had to visit, and all that she had to do and suffer for her country, rose in awful presentiment before the mind; and when the heart gave her a benediction, it was like one pronounced on a living being.

This passage became a battle-ground in the small but noisy pamphlet war, waged over the poetic merits of Pope, and echoing on, tediously enough, until 1821. By then most of the new poets and critics had, absent-mindedly, turned their backs on Pope, and the whole dispute is a survival. It may therefore be named here, though the combatants belong to later chapters. In his edition of Pope (1806) William Lisle Bowles,[1] continuing Joseph Warton's argument of fifty years earlier, had striven to put Pope in his true place, as a perfect describer of 'the manners,' who had lost his hold on natural imagery, and who is therefore an artificer, a writer of the second order. Much later, Campbell, in the *Essay on English Poetry*, spoke warmly for the defence; whereon Bowles, in his *Invariable Principles of Poetry*, replied for the prosecution. A shower of leaves followed; but in the rival tracts of Bowles and Byron the contention comes to an issue. It is a false, or a crudely stated, issue;[2] namely whether, as Bowles put it, 'poetry be more immediately indebted to what is sublime or beautiful in the works of nature, or in the works of art.' And his position proves to be that

> the descriptive poet, who paints from an intimate knowledge of external nature, is more poetical, supposing the fidelity and execution equal, *not* than the painter of human passion, but (than) the painter of external circumstances in artificial life; Cowper paints a morning walk, Pope a game of cards.

This statement will be denied only by those who deny that poetic pleasures, 'supposing the execution equal,' can be compared at all, or ranked in gradation; but no such modern argument was in the mind of Bowles's critics. He overreached himself, by attempting to deny that images drawn from the handiwork of man are sufficient to give the true pleasure; and

inquires of Campbell, why, if they were sufficient, 'it was necessary to bring your ship off the stocks?' It was easy for Byron to rejoin that the handiwork of man counts for as much, in the picture of the ship, as nature, and 'that the poetry is at least reciprocal.' But such arguments could come to little good on either side, and in the age of Coleridge they strike us as somewhat infantile.

It is in one of these pamphlets that Byron calls Pope 'A Grecian temple of the purest architecture.' He is the last real champion, though a blind one, of the stricter classical poetry; he begins, in his *English Bards*, by writing in it himself as best he may; but it is soon overlaid in him, though never quite extinguished. After Byron it appears more rarely; but we have never quite done with it; it is heard in Keats's *Lamia*, it is heard in the *Jacobite's Epitaph* of Macaulay; in lines like

> Heard by Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
> And pined by Arno for his lovelier Tees,

it is heard in its full force and charm. But this chapter has traced its old age, which takes a new spurt, becoming hale and keen, about the end of the eighteenth century. It is found turning on its decayed forms and mocking them; or stung into oratory by hatred of the Revolution; or doing, in Crabbe, the work of the novel of manners; or refreshing itself from the springs of the ballad. But meanwhile the change was astir, which must now be described.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM COWPER

I. Revival of the Sonnet—T. Warton, Bampfylde, Charlotte Smith, Bowles; marks of the school; Coleridge and Bowles; continuity of the Sonnet form.

II. Cowper the renewer of poetical taste; his value as an inventor of forms; confessional writing; his prose and letters.

III. Cowper, his religion and his malady. The four acts of his life—(*a*) 1731-65: magazine articles, early verses, and *Memoir*.

IV. The second act (*b*) 1765-81: letters, *Adelphi*, *Olney Hymns*.

V. The third (*c*) 1781-86: period of productiveness; the volume of 1782, *The Task*, *John Gilpin*, *Tirocinium*, etc. The fourth act (*d*) 1786-1800; Teedon letters; *Homer*; *Yardley Oak*.

VI. Cowper's views of poetry: his models Milton and simplicity. The effect of Milton and Thomson on Cowper exemplified.

VII. Lighter, and lyrical verses, *John Gilpin*; satires, *Table Talk*.

VIII. *The Task*, its character and diction; transposition of the language of Milton; Crowe's *Lewesdon Hill*; *Yardley Oak*.

IX. Translations of Homer; visit of Milton to Cowper in a dream.

I

The triumphs and auguries of the new poetry, between 1780 and 1798, are chiefly to be found in Cowper, Blake, and Burns; and Cowper comes first in order, not only because he published earliest, but because he is deeper in the classical tradition, and is seen working out of it, gradually losing the metallic ring of his first satires, and moving towards simplicity and grace and 'the language of the heart.' Such a process may also be traced in one of the minor rills of verse, which had long been wholly dried up, but was soon to be an ample stream. Cowper wrote sonnets to Romney and Hayley, as well as to Mary Unwin, but only in his later years; the sonnet[1] was not one of the forms that he did most to revive, and he had been anticipated here by a gentle band of writers mostly soon forgotten. The history of the sonnet during the span covered by this book falls into two chapters. One begins with the nine sonnets of Thomas Warton, nearly all published in 1777, and closes with the first of Wordsworth's, written in 1801. The second may be said to close with Blanco White's famous

sonnet, *To Night*, in 1827, when Wordsworth had done his best in this form, and Keats had been some while dead.

Warton's few sonnets are not all metrically accurate, in the Italian sense, and he does not make a very clear pause in thought at the end of the octave. In manner he follows the odes of Gray rather than the single sonnet upon West; he aims at resonance and rich historical colouring, and he also describes nature, though he sees her not a little through the spectacles of Milton. The 'Renascence of wonder' is well seen in Warton's treatment of *Stonehenge*, or of a *Leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon*; and these pieces tell us a good deal about the historian of English poetry. He has that sense of an antiquity, half-ruined by time and half rescued by scholarship and piety, which goes back to the Renaissance. He also has a touch of introspection and melancholy, which is not suggested by his recorded appearances in common rooms or at 'The Club.' The sonnet *On the River Lodon*, though ill-rhymed, begins in such a strain:

> Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
> Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
> And though my way was all through fairy ground,
> Beneath thy azure sky and golden sun . . .

The same pensiveness is heard in Bowles, though he is not the first successor of Warton in this field. It is worth while disinterring the sonnets of John Bampfylde, a young musician who fell into destitution in London and died insane. They are but a handful, and yet, contrasted with the regular diction of the day, they are full of keener tones and of a gentle realism that recalls Goldsmith rather than Crabbe. The mixture of styles in a time of transition is oddly sensible in a passage of this sort:

> The *ruddy prattlers* dear
> Hug the gray mongrel; meanwhile maid and lad
> Squabble for roasted crabs.

And the sense of a dreary country day, when time hangs heavy, is given in the sonnet *On a Wet Summer*:

> Mute is the mournful plain;
> Silent the swallow sits beneath the thatch,
> The vacant hind hangs pensive o'er his hatch,
> Counting the frequent drops from reeded eaves.

That strange egotist, and esteemed editor and bibliographer, Sir Egerton Brydges, relates how, on going up to Cambridge in 1780, he read and admired Bampfylde, and resolved to 'give

himself up to English poetry.' He was also moved by the same great example as Wordsworth twenty years later; and in these obscure authors, as well as in those that are famous, we trace the impulse of renovation in our poetry. Brydges went back to Milton; not the Milton of the epics, whom a dozen poets had followed afar off, nor the Milton of *L'Allegro*, like the Wartons; but, he says,

> I had, in studying Milton's noble sonnets—noble in defiance of Johnson—convinced myself of the force and majesty of plain language, and I resolved never to be seduced into a departure from it.

Brydges unluckily did not make much of his resolve, though he produced a host of sonnets, of which some are dated as early as 1782. He is colourless, though his language is fairly 'plain,' and his metrical structure is correct but for some stray alexandrines. There were also nine editions, between 1784 and 1800, of the sonnets of Mrs. Charlotte Smith, the writer of *The Old Manor House* and of some apt and pointed poems for the young. Mrs. Smith often rhymes irregularly, but she studies Petrarch, and aims at gloss as well as at the expression of an elegant melancholy induced by the contemplation of scenery. Sometimes she manages to record simple feelings simply, and looks at nature and listens to it in her own way:

> The dark and pillowy clouds, the sallow trees,
> Seem o'er the ruins of the year to mourn;
> And, cold and hollow, the incessant breeze
> Sobs through the falling leaves of wither'd fern.

If we shade the sight from Wordsworth's greater sonnets, we shall perceive these timid rays which struggle from behind them and outlive the arc-lamp effects of Erasmus Darwin. In the years 1787-89 the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* disclose not a few experiments in the sonnet form; some merely genteel, like Miss Anna Seward's, and some scholarly, like those of Henry Cary, afterwards the translator of Dante, and Landor's friend. In 1789 came the first sheaf of sonnets, fourteen in number, by William Lisle Bowles, published at Bath. We need not discount overmuch the fervent gratitude expressed by Coleridge, then a boy of seventeen, towards these poems, or that of Wordsworth, who read them a few years later. Coleridge, at least, found in them a refuge from conventional diction, and a lasting impulse towards a quiet and natural style of poetry; an impulse which, as will appear, lies as deep in Coleridge as the richer and stranger one that

comes out in *The Ancient Mariner*. Bowles added to his sonnets, and produced five editions of them in six years, pouring out much verse besides in which the same qualities are seen less concentrated. He had no poetic force, but he had the elements of poetic rightness; a genuine and gentle strain of humanity, that of the cultured rural clergyman; and an instinct for seeking humble-minded solitude in the midst of natural things as a solace in trouble. Above all, he had a suitable diction, in faint relief, but generally pure and adequate. A certain proneness in Bowles to the sentimental, which attracted the sneers of satirists, did not repel Coleridge. The poetic mercies of the year 1789 were still not so lavish, but that we can appreciate the newness of Bowles's imagery: the 'evening glimmering o'er the sighing sedge,' the 'distant turret's gleaming fan,' the 'willow'd hedge' in the Cherwell; and he more than once anticipates Wordsworth's mood of retrospect which is nourished and cheered by memories of beauty:

> For this a look upon thy hills I cast,
> And many a soften'd image of the past
> Pleased to combine, and bid remembrance keep,
> To soothe me with fair views and fancies rude
> When I pursue my path in solitude.

Bowles's *Bamborough Castle*, and many of his other sonnets, are imperfect, being in an unlinked system of rhymes. He uses a variety of the Elizabethan form, in closed rhymes (*abba*, *cddc*, *effe*, *gg*), and many other schemes as well, but usually manages to suggest something of the effect of the Italian kind, which Wordsworth revived so potently. His pamphlets against the surviving idolatry of Pope have been mentioned. It was the poets who decided the matter and abated the titles of Pope, before his critical defenders had perceived that this had been done. Bowles outlived all such wars, and also the age succeeding them, and lived on till 1850. His 'mixture of talent and simplicity' is described by Moore, who visited his parsonage in Wiltshire and saw its 'Shenstonian inscriptions'; 'his sheepbells,' says Moore, 'are tuned in thirds and fifths, but he is an excellent fellow notwithstanding.'

> The Sonnet then is a small poem, in which some lonely feeling is developed . . . but those Sonnets appear to me the most exquisite in which moral Sentiments, Affections, and Feelings are deduced from, and associated with, the scenery of Nature. . . . Respecting the metre of a Sonnet, the Writer should consult his own convenience.

So speaks Coleridge in his *Poems* of 1797, which included specimens by Charles Lamb, Lloyd, and himself. The book was enlarged from the edition of the year before, in which he also printed some by Bowles; whose poems, he remarks, 'domesticate with the heart, and become, as it were, a part of our identity.' This description of the sonnet is avowedly drawn from the practice of Bowles and Charlotte Smith, and fairly represents the stage which the form had reached before Wordsworth took it up. It is characteristic of the school that Coleridge had at first used the title 'Effusion'; but Charles Lamb told him to 'call them Sonnets, for heaven's sake, and not "Effusions,"' and he did so. His friends, luckily, did not 'consult their own convenience' as to the metre; those of Charles Lloyd, in his *Poems* of 1795, and in later volumes, are fairly orthodox in measure, and indeed are often renderings from Petrarch, and his conceptions of its structure are sound enough (see *post*, Ch. XVI., *ad fin.*). Southey's sonnets also begin about this time, and it should be noted how the poetic generations overlap, for Coleridge had begun sonnet-writing before Cowper had written his lines to Mary Unwin: a work of a different strain to the 'effusions' of the school just noticed, and one which has a whole lifetime of troublous experience and devotion behind it.

II

It was not for Crabbe to open new pathways for our poetry. During his long silence, between 1785 and 1807, came up the spring tide, just reaching Crabbe himself. Burns wrote in Scots, and his influence was only oblique, for his forms could not be transplanted. Nor can the position of William Cowper[1] (1731-1800), as the first renewer of a better public taste, be contested on behalf of Blake. We cannot say how Blake might have affected his generation had his *Poetical Sketches* or his illuminated prints been better known. Perhaps he would still have been too original and remote to stir it. In any case, he moves in a wholly different heaven of imagination from Cowper, as is shown sufficiently by the drawings he made for 'Spring' and 'Winter,' when they are compared with the text of *The Task*; though for Cowper might be claimed a closer acquaintance with at least one circle of hell. The two poets are most unlike, where they might be expected to approach one another, in the quality of their imaginative affection for the redbreast or the tame lamb. Cowper's *task*, though he did not know it and refused to be called 'one of the

literati,' was the revival of poetical taste, and in a measure of poetry itself.

His value as a craftsman and inventor is high. He struck out and used beautifully more than one of the styles, which were presently to be taken over into the stock of the poets and elaborated. *The Wreck of the Royal George* lies close behind the heroic songs of Campbell and Tennyson; *Yardley Oak*, and the landscapes of *The Task*, forerun some of the ruminations in *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*; and if the pictures of the postman, the wagoner, and the gipsies have not been followed, it is because they cannot be improved. So Cowper's humorous and domestic verses carry on a tone which is heard again, with a difference, in Locker-Lampson and Austin Dobson long afterwards. And the newness of his work was seen at once; he was not too far beyond his public for recognition. *The Task* and *John Gilpin* were read by every one, and if Cowper's popularity has faded, and his retiring figure is easily hidden behind his successors, still Time has spared much of his verse, and has sifted it with far more kindness than that of the loud, demonstrative Youngs and Churchills. Of Cowper's prose the life is assured; and if he rises to higher and stranger things in his verse, his prose is more safely charmed against uncertainty of style. But his prose, unlike his verse, does not initiate; it carries on one of the best traditions already in existence, and its pedigree down from Addison is of the purest. Both in prose and verse it is his instinct to be confidential, and this strain of confessional writing, in which so much of the matter is sad and unhappy, while much is blithe—the strain that we hear in *The Task* and *The Castaway*, and the poem on the hares, and the correspondence, is one that Cowper acclimatised in English letters, just as Rousseau had acclimatised it in European letters. We find the same instinct, and other maladies, in Coleridge or Shelley; and the presence of this note is another distinguishing mark of the literature that we call romantic. In Wordsworth, too, we find the same instinct, without so much of the malady.

The natural man in Cowper was gay, and sociable, and a little dandified, fond of nonsense but very gently bred; shy, but capable under strain of serious passion; irresistibly overrunning with humorous and affectionate expressiveness to a very few persons, some of whom must be women; but caring, at bottom, quite as much for *things*—for hedges, and trees, and the greenhouse, and the carpenter's shop, as well as for the animals that run about them; and caring, though not so much,

for a very few books on wet days, or as a distraction. And the necessity lay upon him to express himself, to his friends, and next to the public; not to let this bright, playful life ripple away into the sand; to watch it, and seize it as it passed, and to set it down for the pleasure of doing so, so as to prolong and recall the satisfaction of talking about it. Women are accounted foremost in this kind of writing, and it would be easy to call Cowper the best feminine correspondent in the language. But it would be less than just to him, for he is more agreeable than some famous women who have written letters, like Mme. de Sévigné and Mrs. Carlyle; their tongues may be trusted to take the skin off, and, as Nietzsche says, 'Even the sweetest woman is bitter,' while Cowper is humane; and in light verse, which he wrote as perfectly as he did his letters, women are hardly ever artists at all. It is fair to say that he was inspired by women when he did his best in this vein. The gayest of his letters are written to Harriet, Lady Hesketh, his cousin; his happiest early verses, of the tender as well as the cheerfully artificial kind, to her sister Theodora, whom he wished to marry, and who remembered him all her life; *The Task* and *John Gilpin*, as all know, and possibly *Retirement*, were done at the instance of Lady Austen; while his two poems to Mrs. Unwin herself, and his lines to his mother's picture, take us away altogether from this blithe side of Cowper into his strange and solitary house of sadness and bondage, which even those sisters of mercy could not enter, though they might knock and thrust a message of comfort under the door. They ministered, above all, to the long spells of comparative happiness, which are so fully represented in his effortless letters, and in his seeming-effortless verse.

The range of these letters and the qualities by which they attract are not hard to describe. The *lyra heroica*, and the high Wordsworthian strain, are not there; but otherwise the whole of the natural man, and the whole of Cowper's inward struggle, are represented in them. It is hard to say anything about their form, except that it is always right. Any limitations in the letters are not due to inexpressiveness or bad writing, but to Cowper's character. For this reason they do not enter into competition with Swift's letters, or Carlyle's, or with those of Keats or Coleridge; the mental horizon and the whole colouring are different. But though the stage is smaller, the scene has plenty of variety and motion. Cowper reviews it, moved less by any strong current of the blood than by a happy little excitement of the nerves, not unlike that

which we seem to recognise in the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, the story of the cock and the fox. Perhaps Chaucer and Cowper, however dissimilar, have the same central quality—vivacity. Chaucer would have delighted in the interview with the gentleman, Mr. Cox,[1] who came to get out of Cowper the 'Stanzas subjoined to the yearly Bill of Mortality of the parish of All Saints, Northampton'; and he, too, would have consented.

> A plain, decent, elderly figure made its appearance, and being desired to sit, spoke as follows . . . [Cowper replies] 'Mr. Cox, you have several men of genius in your town, why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, Cox the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He surely is the man of all the world for your purpose.' 'Alas, sir, I have heretofore borrowed much help of him, but he is a gentleman of so much reading that the people of our town cannot understand him.'

We can see how such writing is a form of the author's conversation. He tells of domestic nothings, sends light intimate confidences about his tea-parties, his digestion, or his money matters. Everything is gently alive, and we have to read on. It is the record of the week-day man. In a truly English and eighteenth-century tone he exclaims: 'Pulpits for preaching, and the parlour, the garden, and the walk for friendly and agreeable conversation.' It is the tone of many a country house to-day; equable, well-mannered, cheerful—no vulgarity, little passion, good or bad, and not too much thinking, even on Sundays. Time goes quickly in such places: even when, as with Cowper, there is both thinking and passion; and at the age of forty-nine he writes:

> My days steal away silently and march on (as poor mad King Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I can hear them.

But for the illness within, such a life might have been without events. It is the chequering of soft lights with heavy shadows that gives these letters their distinction, and makes them the picture of a soul.

III

Cowper's religion and his madness are, of course, not quite interchangeable terms. Their relationship is not a simple one; they certainly inflamed one another; and neither of them can be separated from the intenser expressions of his literary genius; so that the problem is one of art as well as of

psychology. His faculty of self-expression spared no part of his experience. He is our best authority for his own case, for in his darkest hours his perspicuous logic, even his sobriety of form, seldom desert him, and his melancholy, as he says, 'does not at all affect the operations of my mind on any subject to which I can attach it.' This, whether a blessing or a curse to Cowper, is his characteristic. He could not be more lucid had he been clinically watching the despair of another person. Mrs. Browning's verses on his grave show less self-control than any poem of Cowper's own, and the 'maniac' whose 'deathless singing' they celebrate could reason about his own fixed idea, though he could not reason it away, with singular rigour. The damnable kingdom of darkness which he came to inhabit, he describes in a crystal style; and we look down into the heart of his delirium, where dreadful shapes are seen in motion and in perfectly clear outline.

Thus the history of Cowper's mental health is interwoven with that of his literary genius; and his life divides itself into four acts, or unequal phases from this point of view. The first covers wellnigh half of it, and may be taken to end with his discharge from Dr. Cotton's asylum in June 1765, after a visit of eighteen months. Cowper came out with his reason restored, and his hope of salvation certified for a time, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. In 1752, when twenty-one, he had recovered from a slighter access of melancholia, religious in its character and cure, but free from definite delusions. The sapphics 'written under the influence of delirium,' which are the earliest evidence of his power, date from 1763. He had published nothing but a few papers, after the manner of Steele, in the shortlived *Connoisseur*; and he had only written a handful of verses, part earlier and part later than the illness of 1752; some of them playful in the manner of his favourite Prior, easy talk in jaunty rhyme, others gallant with the light artifice of the old school, others again marked by a soft and complaining note, with that 'even flow' of anapæstic melody which Tennyson noted for admiration; but a handful only. Cowper's subsequent *Memoir* of his early life, embodied in Southey's biography, is the longest production of this period: a picture where every line, every scene of the writer's spiritual adventures is exactly engraved. Adjusted to a mood of religious thankfulness, it is unfair to the natural man, with his cheerful accomplishments and his intervals of peace. But it shows clearly how madness, clothed in doctrine, supervened on that original self, and stole its birthright, and became

second nature; so that whenever he righted himself afterwards and wrote as a child of this world, it was a true recovery of the youth of his soul. We also see that while in his first access religion had driven away his melancholy, in his second and darker one, and ever afterwards, doctrine and mania went together, dragging him down in one terrible undertow, and at last uniting to 'whelm him in deeper gulfs' than that other 'castaway' of whom he afterwards wrote. His doctrine became in turn the cure and the disease, remedying and poisoning itself. The *Memoir* was not printed until long after his death, and is the work of a delicate master of prose. He relates in it the terrors occasioned by his dread of being publicly examined for the clerkship in the House of Lords; his baffled attempts at suicide, and his deepening certainty of spiritual death; the casual texts and voices, wafted in and out of his mind, that held his hope and reason at their mercy; his removal under care; and his gradual reassurance of salvation. The same kind of power is to be shown afterwards in his letters; but not at once, for if ever Cowper's reports upon his soul are forced or heavy, it is during those brief years after his release, when he found that all was well with him.

IV

So the first act ends prosperously in a sense (1765); but the second, which may be held to last nearly till the advent of Lady Austen, that gay exorcist of devils, in 1781, is different. It begins with his settlement at Huntingdon and his meeting with the Unwins. It produced some of the best and cheeriest of his letters; his tract, published in 1816, and entitled *Adelphi*, on the death of his brother John; and the *Olney Hymns* (1779), written in partnership with the Rev. John Newton, his confessor and director. In the critical year 1773, after a spell of deepening gloom, Cowper had the dream [1] which remained for ever one of the fixed points of his delusions, and the fatal voice, *Actum est de te, periisti*, if it sank in happy hours to a disregarded whisper, was always there and ready to be heard. Henceforward his soul was the battle-ground, though not in the sense that he supposed, of a good and an evil principle. On one side was the natural man, with his joy in life, with his powers of observation and invention, of gossip, and of friendship. On the other was his belief that he was lost; he, the companion of the hares [2] and finches, who shared in their light timid life, so that he seems at times like one of them

endowed by some charm with the power of speech, was not only damned, but was a special victim of the wisdom of God, who had made him promises once upon a time, but had withdrawn them for mysterious good reasons. This period ends with the temporary victory of the good principle, which remains in possession, if not undisturbed, during the five years in which Cowper rekindled English poetry.

It is not hard to see why he was led to the evangelical fold within the borders of the church. A religion his heart must have, and it must also satisfy his taste. The dry and dominant orthodoxy, with its array of 'defences' and Paley its coming prophet, could not touch him, and left him cold. The grosser demonstrations of Methodism would have jarred on his self-respect. He fell amongst good, narrow people, professing a milder variation of the Protestant beliefs; they nursed his health and happiness, and he became one of their flock. But he also fell in with Mr. Newton, whose influence, though on some counts it has been fairly vindicated—for Newton[1] had some humour and some tenderness—was in the long run for evil. The text *tantum potuit suadere malorum* holds good against the creed which Newton enforced upon Cowper. The fault cannot be laid wholly on his mania; for his creed both inflamed and defined his mania, and helped to turn his waking and sleeping hours into the hell which he was certain awaited him. The doctrine of reprobation might be suited for certain sinners, for reclaimed slavers, for hard and heavy theological drinkers, like the iron-gutted Newton; but Cowper was of a finer make, and not a sinner at all. He was far too logical for his views to be otherwise than deadly to his health. For such a creed is only bearable in proportion as the victim fails to realise its results in the imagination. Cowper had trembling, naked sensibilities, and reasoned his notions to the bitter end. He hated Rome; yet who cannot wish that he had been born in the old faith,[2] and come into the hands of some humane, adroit confessor, such as Balzac paints, who might have 'cleansed the stuff'd bosom' at the right moment, and led him back, by mingled suggestion and authority, to the paths of sanity, softening by nominal penances gently graded, or by the chance of purgatory at the worst, the more hideous of the patient's delusions? For Cowper, being not a sinner, but the very pattern of innocence, went through a struggle harder than any sinner's; a struggle with a possessing delusion. The real tragedy lies in his never suspecting it was a delusion. He fought, not against its truth, but against his imagined know-

ledge that it was true, and he tried, successfully for a time, to beat it off by distraction. Still the drama is the same; his will on the one side, guiding his power of attention, and the central conviction on the other. The worst and unfairest thing was that he was alone, and had no physician of the body and soul, of the kind that we have wished for, who could help him. Thus the two combatants fought at the very springs of his life. With his normal strength he could sometimes hold out, and even for long periods; but when he sank below that level he was overweighted. A fixed idea lies in wait like a ruthless creature of prey, taking advantage of every weakness, and stealing in under the guard in the darkness. It is never tired, and the will is often tired. Victory is often delusive; the enemy shams dead and is up again. Cowper went through all this, and did much before he succumbed.

His miseries are not wholly to the loss of literature, and that is the only reason why we speak of them. Had he been saved by some fortunate medicine of the soul, we should not have had, as we now have, ringing in our ears the terrible, almost Shakespearean cries of his double self—of that which suffered, and of that which watched and worded the suffering. He might have made more of his gay mundane verse; but we should not have known his full power as a writer. Indeed, in a pitiable, indirect way, we owe his existing poetry to his disease. 'Despair made amusement necessary, and I found poetry the most agreeable amusement.' Some of his merry pieces were made in 'the saddest mood.' Much of his best was done to hold the enemy at bay. But we also owe to the enemy many rare, strange, and bitter pages—the letters to Newton, and afterwards the letters to Teedon and *The Castaway* —that enrich English at Cowper's cost.

V

In the third act of the drama (1781-86) we can watch the real self of Cowper dominant if always on its guard. Nearly all his long original poems, and some of his best shorter ones, were written now; the volume of 1782, and *The Task*, and *Tirocinium*, and *John Gilpin*, and *The Loss of the Royal George*. The impulse to create, which at first was due to Mrs. Unwin, and followed on the removal of Mr. Newton to a larger sphere of parochial usefulness, rose and brightened in the presence of Lady Austen. 'At fifty years of age,' he says, not quite accurately, 'I commenced an author.' His 'tide of animal

sprightliness' was not all that he retrieved. The whole of his life at Olney during those years, with its scenery, its familiar persons, its affections and dreams, lay before him now in soft unclouded light, ready to start into words, not without flashes of more exalted and heroic vision; and he was able, in his longer intervals of peace, to perfect his poetic medium. The background makes the result more wonderful, for his darker, more self-destructive thoughts, often conjured up by the act of writing to Mr. Newton, are constantly audible. 'My brier is a wintry one; the flowers are withered, but the thorn remains.' 'The ground I tread upon is hollow.' 'There is a mystery in my destruction.' We must honour Cowper the more for the force of will that enabled him to combat an adversary within him, whom he supposed to be permitted of God, and who he knew would win. But still more impressive is his steadiness of hand as he wrote his descriptions and pleasantries, and his unjarred delicacy of style in his best passages. Thus we need not, with some critics, thrust away the records of Cowper's darkness, in pure respect for him. Our respect increases as we read them, and they are amongst his title-deeds as a writer.

The last act covers the remaining fourteen years of his life (1786-1800), of which many letters, and the *Homer*, and some other verses and translations, are the memorial. One of them, the fragment *Yardley Oak* (1791), is the best work of his imagination. The *Homer* was a task, undertaken as part of the campaign against bad dreams. Of those dreams the letters become more and more the chronicle, though others are gay as of old, and some contain Cowper's mature thoughts on Homer and translation. The Teedon correspondence, it has been truly said, 'though generally sober and natural in form, is almost entirely insane in substance.'[1] Teedon was an adorer, an unlettered schoolmaster, whose conceit was that he received, in answer to his prayers, divine 'notices' of Cowper's rescue and salvation. The poet's replies, if 'insane in substance,' have a vein of grim irony. He listens to the oracle, but declines its consolations, and replies, sometimes in the third person, with the courtesy of a gentleman addressing an inferior. His own experience never confirms the favourable reports of Teedon. He describes them, in fact, as 'sarcasms of God,' and 'the most deadly arrows in His quiver.' He is told that it is the divine will he should set to work, but work he cannot: 'neither can I reconcile a providential deprivation of the means with a providential call to the undertaking.' The certitude that he is lost gains ground, and he repeats the strain of his

words to Newton: 'I feel a wish that I had never been, a wonder that I am, and an ardent but hopeless desire not to be.' He cannot bear to read the opening of *Paradise Lost*, because he may one day have to 'labour in that field of fire and brimstone.' His nicety of phrase never leaves him, but grows with the failure of his hopes. 'My days have been chequered, not with darkness and light, but with discriminated shades of darkness.' 'Non-existence is no evil, but to exist with the least chance of eternal misery is an evil not to be estimated.' 'Infinite despair is a sad prompter.' He doubts the value of prayer, and finds that his God continues to break promises. At last he sees that his 'next plunge will be into madness'; and so it proves. As is shown by his sympathy with Madame Guyon, whose poems he translated, Cowper was by nature a mystic of the tender kind, craving for gentle gradual illuminations and final union with the divine. But in his case, under the sway of a relentless theology, the mystical experience is inverted, and he is dragged slowly backward from blessedness to that state of despair, which the ordinary mystic passes through and leaves behind. He fought to the last, revising his *Homer* and trying to edit the works of Milton; but the disease conquered, and something like the seventh age of man—'sans everything'—was Cowper's lot. But until words failed him he was true to words: when he could not use them otherwise, he used them for the record of his sick soul, and this loyalty to his calling enhances his honours as a writer. He died in 1800. The *Lyrical Ballads* were out, but he does not seem to have read them.

VI

In his views of poetry Cowper is a rebel, and his 'gentleness' need not be exaggerated. Even in his moral poems of 1782 he is seen escaping from the current style, though he uses the traditional couplet. In *The Task* and *Yardley Oak* he finds his own style. And he tells us what the tyranny was with which he broke, and where he sought for inspiration. He broke with Pope, and Johnson, and artifice. He was inspired by the love of Milton and the love of simplicity,[1] and his real feat is to have found a poetic language that reconciled these two affections.

The lines in *Table Talk* which deplore the 'mere mechanic art' of Pope's followers, while celebrating Pope's own 'musical finesse,' form only part of Cowper's indictment, which is aimed

at the style, not of the *Epistles and Satires*, but of the *Homer*. His letters are full of reproaches against Pope's looseness of rendering, his unreal glossiness and floweriness, his 'inflated and strutting phraseology,' and his defectiveness in pathos and feeling; vices that are all bound up with his false choice of a metre. Cowper's paper[1] in the *Gentleman's Magazine* is the speech for the prosecution. He also calls Pope a 'disgusting letter-writer,' conscious and vain; he himself prefers a letter 'of the true helter-skelter kind,' and says truly that in his own correspondence he is 'clear of the charge of premeditation.' We feel that in much of his verse he is guided by the feeling that Pope's ways are wrong; and this although, in the Preface to his own *Iliad*, Cowper says, 'I number myself amongst the warmest admirers of Mr. Pope as an original poet.' To Johnson, in a rhymed epitaph and in his letters, he does rather unwilling justice. He praises the narrative part of the *Lives of the Poets*, which shows 'great erudition and sense,' and 'a penetrating insight into character,' as well as 'a happy talent of correcting the popular opinion.' But while the book was in its first vogue, Cowper was writing indignantly to his friends about it. 'That Johnson' is 'a literary cossack,' whose 'old jacket' he would like to 'thresh'; he is a 'coxcomb,' deaf to Prior and deafer still to Milton. That was the real offence. Johnson slighted, he could not enjoy the style of Milton, which had long cast its threatening shadow forward over the vogue of Dryden and Pope, and to which Cowper now went back as a model for the renovation of exalted verse.

Cowper's own taste in literature was not wide, and was capable of being infantile. He condemns the lives that the poets lived, and thinks those chronicled by Johnson 'a very worthless set of people.' He can say that a 'virtuous madrigal' of Sternhold and Hopkins is worth all 'Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,' and this remark is worse than anything said by Johnson himself. He cannot bear Chapman's translation; he has no taste for the Scots of Burns. He confesses that his own cultivation is slender, and that, for fear of falling into imitation, he seldom reads an English poet; a fear that, considering his sensitive chameleon habit of mind, may have been a sound one. But he makes one great exception. 'Few people,' he said, 'have studied Milton more, or are more familiar with his poetry, than myself.' He sees that the seal of Milton's greatness is his language, and says nobly and well that 'Milton took a long stride forward, left the language of his own day far behind him, and anticipated the

expressions of a century yet to come.' This forecast was verified in *Hyperion*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, and Landor's *Regeneration*; and Cowper begins to verify it himself in *The Task* and *Yardley Oak*. His manner is original, but it starts from Milton's, the triumphant dignity of whose intertwisted cadences is ever in his ears. His fashion of describing quite familiar things is a kind of unaffronting, pleasant parody, or transposition, of Milton's epic style.

The influence of Milton had taken a bad turn in the eighteenth century. Much of his technique, to speak the truth, is intricate and skilful but dull, hard and ill-inspired; and on this part of it the poets took hold, who could not take hold on his greatness. Thus Milton served, while he altered, the artistic vices of the century. The well-known pack of epics, georgics, and didactics was the consequence. Thomson and Gray in their colder moments fall into the same bad company. If we think of Young and Akenside trying to be sublime, or of Warton trying to be pensive, we see that the wrong following of Milton was as rich a source of false writing as Pope's *Homer* itself. But for all that, Milton is the greatest single force in the liberation of our poetry. Where he is great, his power over his fellow-craftsmen is perpetual. Travesty could not for ever mar his music; the sound of it is always there, in the intervals of those unskilful, unbearable imitative drums and tomtoms, and it swells up from the distance like the

> Gradual solitary gust
> That comes upon the silence, and dies off
> As if the ebbing air had but one wave.

This double effect of Milton's verse for good and evil is well seen in Cowper, though the evil is qualified by Cowper's humour and tact. It is seen plainer, no doubt, in Thomson. In Cowper's blank verse, in his most Miltonic passages, the slightly petrifying memory of Thomson is apt to interfere. In the invocation to Evening we see the power of Milton, the deflecting power of Thomson, and the new, original harmony that is achieved nevertheless:

> Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
> Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
> Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
> With matron step slow-moving, while the Night
> Treads on thy sweeping train.

Milton could not have fallen to 'streaky'; and the 'matron step slow-moving' is like Thomson when he wishes to be like

Milton ; but the personal appeal and slow undulation of the first two lines are Cowper's own. Though they could not have been written but for Milton's cadences, it is Cowper who bids the evening *continue long*, for fear, perhaps, of the darkness and the visions that the night may bring. And when, following his master, he follows him amiss, as in the rhetorical wastes of the *Winter Morning's Walk*, it is more from a wrong choice of subject than from failure of ear or style. The *Homer* must be called a painful instance of failing ear, though it aims at Milton's dignity. But Cowper shows his mastery of the epic style in his original pieces ; not so much in the startling passages where he rises to its full pitch, as in the level, simple, descriptive parts, where he carries it delicately down to the rendering of domestic things : a kind of verse that approaches prose, but is decisively severed from prose by the poetry that hangs in the air like the minute sparkles of dust that he describes as rising from the threshing-floor. Indeed, for his quieter pencillings Cowper may well have caught a hint from those of *Paradise Regained*, or from the lines that describe the man who comes out from the reeking town to enjoy the smell of 'tedded grass' ; a text that would be much to Cowper's mind, and may also interpret our own feeling when we open *The Task* after closing *The Dunciad*. This subdued method he often uses :

> Yes, thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand
> That feeds thee ; thou mayst frolic on the floor
> At evening, and at night retire secure
> To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed.

There is Milton in this, but there is also simplicity, and simplicity is Cowper's other star. He desires it, and often reaches it. He does not study any author in order to do so ; it comes to him by nature. In his verse he sometimes swerves from it, either towards the noble elaboration that Milton taught him, or towards a false elaboration ; but in prose he has it always. He has it in his expression not only of simple and winning things, but of elusive and painful things. Often it is equally at his command in verse and prose for the treatment of the same topic : 'When I think,' he says, 'I am very apt to do it in rhyme.' A viper attacks his kittens, and the result is a letter to a friend, and also the rhymed *Colubriad*. *The Castaway* is the counterpart of his letters to Teedon, and the passage in *The Task*, where he calls himself a stricken deer that left the herd, of a letter to Lady Hesketh.[1] 'Simplicity,'

he wrote in 1783 (the year of Blake's *Poetical Sketches*, of which he did not know),

> Simplicity is become a very rare quality in a writer. . . . Swift and Addison were simple; Pope knew how to be so, but was frequently tinged with affectation; since their day I hardly know a celebrated writer who deserves that character.

He himself deserves it, whenever he sits down to describe some incident that he has seen the day before, and which he dashes down and has done with. The virtue of such a style is that we do not look at it, but look through it, and the result is a classic.

VII

As a light poet Cowper derives from the school of Prior, but substitutes country grace and neatness for town finish. The verse of affectionate and happy compliment addressed to women, such as *The Rose* and *Catharina*, is peculiarly his. He also loves a fable, with a little perfunctory moral attached, the story of which is drawn from experience; sometimes we find it told again in his letters. *The Dog and the Water-Lily* and *The Retired Cat* are of this order. Nearer to him than any poet could be, is Bewick, with his 'tail-pieces'; there is the same perfection of minute line, and the same expressiveness of plant or animal life. *The Diverting History of John Gilpin* (which might be credited to the shade of Goldsmith, did we not know its authorship) is the most cheerful and vociferous thing that Cowper wrote, and yet has all his neatness and finish too; qualities to which the slyly-inserted, loose-hanging ballad tags contribute not a little. A favourite metre for quite other effects is the 'rocking-horse' or anapæstic quatrain; of this Cowper was born a master, and in his hands it escapes those dangers of cloggedness on the one side, and of mawkishness on the other, to which it has often fallen. Well do some of Cowper's youthful lines compare with the popular and famous effects, in the same measure, of Moore and Byron:

> Bid adieu, my sad heart, bid adieu to thy peace;
> Thy pleasure is past, and thy sorrows increase;

One stanza of this lyric is worthy—and no more could be said in the matter of lyrical melody—of Edgar Allan Poe, whose insuperable line

> And the fever called living is conquered at last,

is as true a mirror of his own temper as these are of Cowper's:

> Already deprived of its splendour and heat,
> I feel thee more slowly, more heavily beat;
> Perhaps overstrained with the quick pulse of pleasure,
> Thou art glad of this respite to beat at thy leisure;
> But the sigh of distress shall now weary thee more
> Than the flutter and tumult of passion before.

'The poplars are felled' is better known; it has the 'same whispering sound,' which rose in the former piece, one of Cowper's few love-poems, to a light wail, and in this one sinks to something just above silence. Of the two heroic lyrics, written in another tune, as though to the 'harp the Cambro-Britons used,' *Boadicea* is the more conventional, in the pattern of Gray, and is better in rhythm than in phrase. There is no such flaw in *The Loss of the Royal George*. It is not in any pattern at all, it has no precedent nearer than Drayton, it is freer of blemish than anything of the sort in Campbell; and we can the better feel the perfection of its almost hard simplicity, by imagining in how opposite a mode of excellence, in what symphonies of undulating prose, the same 'vision of sudden death' might have been treated by De Quincey. Here Cowper quits himself and his usual manner; while in the lines *To the Nightingale*, which point as nobly and as plainly forward to the best of the same kind in Wordsworth, as it excels Logan's (or Michael Bruce's) verses *To the Cuckoo*, printed only eleven years earlier, he is back again with himself and his troubles; and wins us thereby perhaps more thoroughly than Wordsworth himself, who always refuses or does not desire to complain. But it is one of Cowper's many herald poems, and is dated 1792.

By the side of verse like this, the bulky moral satires that Cowper had produced ten years before seem of a past generation. To do them justice, they must be compared with the school from which they are seen emerging. The first of them is called *Table Talk*, but the title of another, *Expostulation*, better expresses their temper, and as a whole they are the medium of the author's opinions rather than of his genius. The influence of Churchill, Cowper's schoolfellow, whom he portrays with a generous touch, has been suggested; and some of the invectives might be those of a shriller Churchill. Cowper writes better than that ferocious improviser, whom he admired too much; but he knows the world less well. He beats the air when he rates society at large. In attacking slavery and inhumanity it is not enough to be on the right side. But

anything that really comes within the sharpened ken of the recluse, he touches vividly at once. He excels in the formal rhymed character, as in that of the fashionable preacher, or of the

fine puss-gentleman that 's all perfume,

or of the elderly prude whom he saw in Hogarth's drawing. In *Retirement* there is plenty of gaiety; he is on his own ground, and is beginning to draw landscape. But the best feature in the volume of 1782 is the freer, quicker run of the heroic verse, as compared with Johnson's or Goldsmith's. There is less see-saw, and a visible struggle against the 'mechanic art.' But the fetters were still so strong that Cowper, with a true instinct, turned in *The Task* to blank verse. He found it hard to write, and suffered a revulsion, and said in 1784, 'I do not mean to write any more blank. It is more difficult than rhyme, and not so amusing in the composition.' But he went on with it, and played no common tune upon it.

Cowper also produced two unimportant polemics in rhyme. A still-born work by his cousin Madan, a clergyman, called *Thelyphthora*, to prove that polygamy is not unscriptural and would palliate the ills of society, provoked *Anti-Thelyphthora*, 'a tale,' in which the heretic, Sir Airy, after a scene of dalliance, is overthrown by 'Sir Mar-Madan,' supposed to be a Monthly Reviewer. It is strange to see Cowper trying for the bold and scathing utterance of Dryden, whose versification he nearly follows. The elaborate *Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools*, may be coloured by what he had observed, rather than by anything that he had suffered, at Westminster; but in spite of a few brisk passages and accurate pictures, it is the railing of a hermit. These pieces are dated 1781 and 1784; Cowper's tardy genius is seen to have expanded at a rapid rate, in *The Task* of the following year. It was time, indeed, that he should do something considerable, at the age of fifty-four.

VIII

The Task is neither a formal garden nor a woodland; it is more like a park cunningly and irregularly laid out, where we do not see too much at once and are for ever recrossing our own steps unexpectedly. There are grass, and water, and arbours; it is a pity that, do what we will, we should so often, round sudden corners, come on the same uncomely preaching-box amid the greenery. Still Cowper achieves his wish to secure 'much variety and no confusion' in this lively offshoot

of the dull old local and didactic poem. Such literary origins betray themselves in the dull unreadable stretches of the book. Much of the style is simply that of Cowper's earlier satires, like *Truth and Hope*, with the rhymes gone. The poet is here his own judge :

> Since pulpits fail, and sounding-boards reflect
> Most part an empty ineffectual sound,
> What chance that I, to fame so little known,
> Nor conversant with men or manners much,
> Should speak to purpose, or with better hope
> Crack the satiric thong ?

All the same, we can admire the easy finesse of the transitions in *The Task*, and the impression of art which is left amidst the absence of plan. Cowper is himself the *subject*, in the philosophical sense, of the poem ; he is present in all he describes, and takes us along with him. It is his own shadow that he watches in the winter morning's walk, and the word *we*—meaning himself, and the reader his friend and companion—is always recurring :

> Hence, ankle-deep in moss and flowery thyme,
> We mount again, and feel at every step
> Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft
> Raised by the mole.

It is this introduction of himself that makes Cowper a neighbour of the romantic poets. He has not the magic carpet of Coleridge, he is tied to the valley of Ouse ; but he confides in his reader, he *signs* every landscape and ' interior,' as a place that has become part of his inner vision. It is true that the passages, which show that a new painter of natural things has appeared, are sometimes stiffened out with a poetic diction that would be pedantic were it not really half-playful ; the ' fleecy tenants ' of the sheepfold, the ' leaning pile deciduous ' of the haystack. In *The Seasons* this kind of speech was used seriously ; by the poets of *Lyrical Ballads* it was solemnly and duly denounced ; Cowper comes between, with his pleasant, not quite satirical, use of it. For him it retains some real dignity ; he does not parody it as a bad thing, and does not smile so much at the diction as at himself for using it. In *Yardley Oak* this dissolving stage of the high epical or didactic style is again evident.

The simplest and best of these scenes occur in *The Sofa*, the first of the six books, and in the beginning of the fourth, *The Winter Evening* ; but they are seldom far off. Much is gained by the

feeling that the artist is not making a set picture, but is himself moving from point to point of what he describes, fearful of being tired or tiresome. He denotes the different colours of the leaves, with no attempt to carry the fancy beyond them, with no mystery, just as they come, and as if no one had seen them before, but rather as if he were sorting out green tints for a pleasant embroidery-pattern.

> paler some,
> And of a wannish grey; the willow such,
> And poplar that with silver lines his leaf,
> And ash far stretching his umbrageous arm;
> Of deeper green the elm; and, deeper still,
> Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.

This is the regular texture of his description, and it gives relief to the richer poetic passages which he also commands:

> The chequered earth seems restless as a flood
> Brushed by the wind.

At times he gives the note to Wordsworth:

> Mighty winds
> That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
> Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
> The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
> And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
> Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
> And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.

From this he passes to the mountain torrent, which so soon slips down into a rill; and so to the birds of the day and the night; and thence again to the 'weather-house, that useful toy,' whence a puppet-man, wrapped up, emerges as a signal of rain, as the curious may see in the drawing that Blake [1] made for the passage. The style, which is sensitive to these changes of theme, is a new thing in our poetry, and its varieties invite discrimination. They may, despite their different levels and intensities, be regarded as modifications of the same pattern, and not as patches of pied materials carefully sewn in. This pattern, as suggested already, is the epic language of Milton transposed for Cowper's purposes. One of his juvenile pieces was a travesty of Milton in the fashion of Phillips's *Splendid Shilling*; the subject is, *On Finding the Heel of a Shoe*:

> This ponderous heel of perforated hide
> Compact, with pegs indented many a row.

In the same way he starts the topic of *The Sofa*, which Lady Austen had commanded. Mankind first sat on a stool :

> And such in ancient halls and mansions drear
> May still be seen, but perforated sore
> And drilled with holes the solid oak is found.

For some ninety lines he thus acquits himself of his 'task,' working out the vein and reverting to it later whenever the tone requires ; but meanwhile he is free, and breaks away into his own simpler, happy movement :

> But gouty limb,
> Though on a Sofa, may I never feel,
> For I have loved the rural walk through lanes
> Of grassy swarth.

And so for two hundred lines more the walk continues, until he finds that he is forgetting his true original text, which is to dispraise the town in honour of the country ; and to that text, not without dreariness, but with the lucky digression on the gipsies, and the noble one on the story of Crazy Kate, he keeps. Milton and simplicity—to those two elements, variously blended, the style of *The Task* can be referred. Cowper is most himself, and turns his back most completely on the poetical tradition from Dryden onwards, and anticipates the best writing of the same order in the age yet to come, when he writes thus :

> She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
> And hoards them in her sleeve ; but needful food,
> Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
> Though pinched with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed.

This, not to speak beyond measure, is more like something in *King Lear* than it is like Milton. We dare not say that there is much of it in *The Task*, but there is enough ; it has the piercing sound that we find in Cowper's lines to Mrs. Unwin, the sudden lift into a rarer world of feeling than his usual, observant, lively habit of mind might seem to promise. Encouraged by thus finding his powers, Cowper tries, towards the close of his long poem, and at intervals throughout it, to raise his language to a climax for the utterance of his religious and social faith. But this lofty, reflective sort of writing, while it shows the piety and beauty of his spirit, is not often successful ; and he hardly accomplishes it very well, except in the unfinished *Yardley Oak*, one of his last original compositions in verse (1791).

The Task, it may be said in passing, had an immediate and by no means unworthy echo in the *Lewesdon Hill*[1] (1785) of William Crowe, afterwards Public Orator at Oxford, and writer of an unrefreshing tract on versification. This poem, long since disregarded, but admired at the time by Rogers and his set and twice reissued, shows a vivid sense of simple colour and a gift for the true familiar style. It runs off too much into mere discoursing, but the scenery at moments bears confronting with Cowper's own pictures; and as it is hard to find, a quotation may be given:

> How changed is thy appearance, beauteous hill!
> Thou hast put off thy wintry garb, brown heath
> And russet fern, thy seemly-coloured cloak,
> To bide the hoary frosts and dripping rains
> Of chill December, and art gaily robed
> In livery of spring; upon thy brow
> A cap of flowery hawthorn, and thy neck
> Mantled with new spring furze and spangles thick
> Of golden bloom; nor lack thee tufted woods
> Adown thy sides; tall oaks of lustre green,
> The dark fir, the light ash, and the nesh tops
> Of the young hazel join to form thy skirts
> In many a wavy fold of verdant wreaths.
> So gorgeously hath nature dressed thee up
> Against the birth of May; and, vested so,
> Thou dost appear more gracefully array'd
> Than Fashion's worshippers.

This is unpretending, but it is more natural than much of *The Seasons*; for *The Task* has come between; and the sprinkling of Dorset words like *nesh* is agreeable. Crowe's picture of the Tor of Glastonbury veiled in cloud, so that 'its dim bulk becomes annihilate,' has the same quality. The poem comes well between *The Task* and *Yardley Oak*.

The birth and glory, the decay and mutations of a noble tree are themes that might easily drop into prose or platitude. It might, on the other hand, awaken a high imagination; we can surmise what Wordsworth, in happy hour, might have done with it. Cowper's is a poem midway between these opposites; it is a poem of the fancy, with a current of didactics; and it has a relieving element of play, rising to imaginative power; and it is wrought with such extreme study as almost to burden itself with refinements. It is of a different tribe to the ruminations of Blair, Young, and their company, on the mutability of things. The versification, however, has several of the marks of the school, such as those epithet-guarded nouns, as in 'excoriate forks deform,' and prominent 'wens globose,'

which go back to Milton, but which are here half-playful ; and also the awkward final monosyllable (a blemish of Milton's followers), which jerks the line to its knees at the end of a paragraph :

> And all thine embryo vastness, at a gulp.

Still, the metre is a worthy outgrowth and adaptation of the slow-moving Miltonic one, with a great frequency and rich variety of pause, and many single verses of high nobility :

> Thought cannot spend itself, comparing still
> The great and little of thy lot, thy growth
> From almost nullity into a state
> Of matchless grandeur, and declension thence,
> Slow, into such magnificent decay.

Cowper failed to make an ending ; after finishing with the oak, he starts on a curious analysis, which proves too hard to carry further, of the mind of Milton's Adam ; and so, with a large image, he breaks off :

> History, not wanted yet,
> Leaned on her elbow, watching Time, whose course,
> Eventful, should supply her with a theme.

IX

The translations[1] of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which distracted for Cowper 'so many thousand hours,' were also part of his campaign on behalf of simplicity against rhetoric. In the Prefaces to his first and to his revised editions of the *Iliad* we have his full mind. He rejected rhyme and chose blank verse, he tells us, because a rhymed version cannot be faithful, and can only be an imitation or paraphrase ; and because Pope had been driven by his rhymes into infidelity to his original :

> On this head, therefore, the English reader is to be admonished, that the matter found in me, whether he like it or not, is found also in Homer, and that the matter not found in me, how much soever he may admire it, is found only in Mr. Pope. I have omitted nothing : I have invented nothing.

This claim is just ; in so far as Cowper's scholarship allowed, and so far as is possible in any metrical translation, he follows Homer close, as to his 'matter' ; so close at times, indeed, that we find ourselves wishing he had written in prose, which would have been Cowper's prose, and would have left him freer still to render word by word. He does not touch on the

difficulties of his metre, such as the inequality of the English decasyllable, in its length and contents, to the hexameter; but is satisfied with saying, that the example of Milton shows it can be used with energy and harmony—a harmony enhanced by occasional roughness—for a long translated poem. That this is true, the fragments of the *Iliad* translated by Tennyson will show; but Cowper could not give either the energy or the harmony. He seems to lose the command of those qualities, that he shows in his original verse; and the reason is less any failure of power, than his principle of fidelity, and the fetters of the diction he has chosen. And it is chosen in order that it may not resemble Pope's, and may resemble Homer's. The result is, that he loses also the speed and sonority which Pope attains.

Cowper found that Homer ends his periods with the end of a line, and does the same. He varies his pauses within the line very studiously, though more by effort than with a true instinct; but his closes are nearly always bad in his *Homer*, as they often are in his own blank verse. In this he failed to escape from the grand fault of the eighteenth-century poets. Sometimes he does escape from it:

> My brother! who in me
> Hast found a sister worthy of thy hate,
> Authoress of all calamity to Troy,
> Oh that the winds, the day when I was born,
> Had swept me out of sight, whirl'd me aloft
> To some inhospitable mountain-top,
> Or plung'd me in the deep; there had I sunk
> O'erwhelm'd, and all these ills had never been.

This is Cowper at his best; the passage runs fast; the Miltonic inversions in the fifth and seventh lines, and the trisyllabic foot in the third, and the retarded close, make an excellent harmony; and one reason is that he does not here keep quite close to the Greek words, and feels less cramped. But more commonly we have this kind of effect:

> Meantime from tower to tower the Ajaces mov'd
> Exhorting all, with mildness some, and some
> With harsh rebuke, whom they observed through fear
> Declining base the labours of the fight.

This is the dead stop, and this the Latin mannerism, to which Thomson and Young were enslaved; nothing is less like Homer, or like Milton.

Cowper's plain diction, which he defends, is a step in the right path; but his fault is, that unlike Homer he does not

make it poetical. In his Preface, which is one of his best pieces of prose and of criticism, he seems to see this peril, and his statement of his ideal can hardly be bettered :

> Were it possible to find an exact medium, a manner so close that it should let slip nothing of the text, nor mingle anything extraneous with it, and at the same time so free as to have an air of originality, this seems precisely the mode in which an author might be best rendered. . . . The translation which partakes equally of fidelity and liberality, that is close, but not so close as to be servile, free, but not so free as to be licentious, promises fairest.

True ; but under this lies the assumption, that the happy medium is found, and the ' plain and unelevated ' language of Homer reproduced, by a bare diction, which is only one degree above prose, and which is distinguished from prose chiefly by superimposing many syntactic inversions and epithets adverbially used : devices which Milton had employed, but which Thomson had travestied from Milton, and which Cowper imitates from Thomson and his contemporaries. The great drawback of Cowper's version is that it is not poetical enough ; and if we were to read it only, we should think Homer rather a dry speaker. Cowper, when translating, could seldom give the right ineffable turn to his plain language. In his revisions, in deference to critics, he smoothed out some of the rough rhythms and made many other changes, but this did not mend matters. The importance of his version is therefore chiefly historical ; in that he wrought faithfully at the meaning, and said farewell to rhetoric, and used. though he did not master, the greatest of metrical instruments.

His translations of Milton's Latin poems remain to be named. They are full of sympathy, but, being put into a form (although a supple one) of the eighteenth-century couplet, and ' tagged with rhyme,' they fail to give the impression of the original, or its intensity and curious ruggedness. But for these and other honours the shade of Milton was not ungrateful ; for he came in a dream,[1] and admitted Cowper into the company of the poets. The letter to Hayley in which this incident is described is as perfect in form as anything in Cowper, and shows once more that he is of the company of Addison.

> I dreamed that being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking towards the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with

those feelings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father, such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed for so many years; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with complacence, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his *Paradise Lost*, as every man must, who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a schoolboy. He answered me by a smile and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, 'Well, you for your part will do well also.' At last, recollecting his great age (for I understood him to be two hundred years old), I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking; I took my leave, and he took his with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus, may it not?

'Well, you for your part will do well also'; could there be a more delicate way for a diffident poet, in a dream, to promise himself some share of permanence? He has attained it. Go forward some twenty years to Shelley and his companions, and Cowper seems like one of those half-forgotten old water-colour masters of exquisite line, in the dim blue of whose English low skies and blotted distances there is not much sunlight, and whom it may not be best to hang among the Turners. But we should put him in the ante-room, and study him first before going forward. We are sure to come back to him; we come back to him, even after Shelley, for a while.

CHAPTER IV

SCOTTISH LYRIC: ROBERT BURNS AND OTHERS

I. Stages of the poetical work of Burns; little change or development. Likeness with the new poets of the South; connections with the English classical school.

II. Burns and the soil; portraying power, in relation to scenery, his friends, his enemies, and himself. Everything individual; persons and places specified. Revolutionary feeling original in Scottish character. Anti-Kirk.

Relationship to Scottish tradition, in temper and literary forms. Character as a peasant. 'The freedom of the natural soul'; self-destructive elements.

III. Form: in what sense Burns is a classic; species of his perfection. Theocritus and Catullus. Speed of his verse; brevity of his compositions. Comparison with the English poets of his time.

IV. Songs: Burns the voice of the Scottish past. Differences between the songs and the other poems. Methods exemplified from *Auld Lang Syne* and other pieces. Varieties of strain.

V. English and Scottish poetry of Burns discriminated. Fallacies current; senses of the term 'English'; examples.

VI. Position amongst Scottish singers of his time; no school founded by Burns. Procedure of various poets; multitude of writers. Lady Nairne. Selected writers: Hector MacNeill; Allan Cunningham; Robert Tannahill; *Anster Fair*.

I

Most of the work of Robert Burns [1] (1759-96) was done during his last twelve years. Some good things have reached us that he wrote before he was twenty-five—a handful of songs, and a poem or two like *The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie*; more than enough to show his quality. But his art was in no sense precocious, and seems to have flowered suddenly. The three years that followed his migration to Mossgiel in 1784 are as surprising in their swift and rich fertility as those that Marlowe spent in London or Byron in Italy. Afterwards it is not easy to trace much growth or change in his genius, his interests, or his power of execution, except that he gave himself more and more to pure lyric. After his volumes of 1786 and 1787 (*Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*) he did not invent or practise many new species of poetry. He hardly

wrote more than two long, concerted compositions; one of which, *The Jolly Beggars*, not published in his lifetime, may be of early date, while the other, *Tam o' Shanter*, may have been composed in 1790. His third volume of *Poems* (1793) contains some admirable pieces, but they are of the old kinds. In 1787 had begun Burns's regular activities as saviour, editor, and maker of Scottish popular lyric. Many of the best and freshest of his songs appeared in James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* (1787-96), especially in the volume of 1788. Meanwhile, in 1792, began his contributions to the *Scottish Airs* of James Thomson, a person of Anglified taste in diction; and these, though they include many famous and beautiful pieces, lack the even perfection and choiceness of the songs in the *Museum*. Burns left many of his best poems and songs to be collected, or published, after his death, including *Holy Willie's Prayer* and *The Twa Herds*, and endless scraps, epigrams, verse epistles, political squibs, and humorous epitaphs. He was as free-handed as Nature; being indeed, as Pope says of Shakespeare, 'not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature.'

We can think of Burns either as a singer of the new age after the dead season, an unconscious companion of Blake and Cowper; or, more truly, as crowning the long history of Scottish poetry, of which he comes forward as the authentic voice and living soul. He is at any rate a *classic*; not merely because he is a great poet who left much that is perfect, but because of the likeness of that perfect work to the classical antique. There may be, at this time of day, little left to say about Burns; but we may once more note his value and interest from these three points of view—as a poet of Britain, as a poet of Scotland, and as the most classical poet of his time writing in any form of English.

His connections and likenesses with the poets of the South are curious. His first flowering-time coincides nearly with that of Blake; and, different as they are, both of them are inspired by the past of poetry. Blake, in his youth, was stirred by the Elizabethan tradition that had long faded down and was only then being duly recovered. But to Burns the past was also the present; he found in full life the native verse, with its ancestral forms and themes, and of this he became the sovereign artist; he had four hundred unbroken years of inheritance behind him. Blake flung away from his early love of Spenser and seventeenth-century lyric, and made an art of his own which has found no real followers. Burns

schooled himself, ever deeper and more devotedly, in the inherited art of his country, and left it higher than it had ever been, and became so puissant, nay, so oppressive, a representative of it, that with the southern reader he generally blots out the figures both of his creditors and his debtors.

Burns owed nothing to Cowper or Crabbe, though he read Cowper with admiration, exclaiming, 'Is not *The Task* a glorious poem?' whilst Cowper called Burns an extraordinary genius, but blamed his 'uncouth dialect'—which in fact is not a dialect but a language; and Crabbe, with the 'stalk of carl-hemp' in his composition, honoured Burns[1] 'as enthusiastically as the warmest of his countrymen.' Burns himself was brought up not only on native song and legend, but in the current schools of southern verse and prose. He read Pope, *The Spectator*, Locke, then Thomson and Shenstone, then the novelists; and then, he says, 'meeting with Fergusson's *Scotch Poems*, I strung anew my wildly-sounding rustic lyre with emulating vigour.' His taste for the classical tradition he always kept; read with delight the essays in the *Mirror* and *Lounger*; and, when called upon to stock a village library, recommended the same diet.

> The earliest thing of composition I remember taking pleasure in was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison beginning 'How are Thy servants blest, O Lord.'

Any one can see the bad, the deflecting influence of much of this reading upon Burns. His English poems are chequered with its stiffer diction, and his high-falsetto English prose—due perhaps somewhat to Mackenzie—is all too abundant. But it was a sound influence as well. It helped to make him classical in the true and large, as well as in the unlucky and transitory sense of the term. 'Sensibility,' in its literary guise, played havoc with him; but then the strong, cool-headed element in Fielding or Pope appealed to him too; these great describers of manners taught him veracity, we may think, and economy. What Pope and Addison, at their best, had achieved was scale, concision, keeping, and rapidity; and these are qualities of Burns—inborn doubtless, but brought out and encouraged by such models. It has been remarked by a French scholar[2] how much Burns owes to

> the two most classical authors of the classical age of English letters, who possessed grace and sobriety of form, and whose ideas are developed on a highly reasonable plan.

Burns profited by these qualities, not when he was inditing too elegant prose, and not when he wrote,

> Here Poesy might wake her Heav'n-taught lyre,
> And look through nature with creative fire,

which is detestable; but when he was truly himself, when he was making *The Twa Dogs* or the *Epistle to Lapraik*; when he is economical, and swift, and plain. It was to Pope and his school, more than to Collins or Thomson or any forerunner of romance, that he owed such gifts, so far as he owed them to any Englishman. But he owed them in the main, after all, to no Englishman, but to the best native habit and to the tradition which he was himself to strengthen.

He is of the new poetry, on the other hand, in a score of ways; but it is by coincidence, not by infection. If, like Blake, and in fuller measure than Cowper and Crabbe, he has the artistic senses fully alive, and a vivid delicate notation for what he sees and hears; and if he is near to some of them, not only in his feeling for beauty, but in his feeling for homely and humorous life and for realistic detail; well, it is not because he has drunk at the waters of Romanticism as others have; he has drunk from another, from the old, long-flowing, northern source. His one point of closer contact with southern letters is seen in his real but rather fitful revolutionary zeal; but this affinity also is somewhat illusory. His primary power is that of seeing the object; his words show it; they do not, as with the pseudo-classicists, get between us and the object. To prove this duly would be to quote too much; and only stray instances, familiar enough, can be repeated here.

II

Burns lived nearer to the brown earth, upturned for sowing and crowded with life, than any other of our poets. But he does not in general portray scenery for its own sake, though he can do so brilliantly. It is a habitation for men and dumb creatures, a background, a chorus, a thing subordinate to the life that swarms in it. It is alive itself, not in any pantheistic way after the manner of Wordsworth or Shelley, and it offers to Burns no religion and no instruction. Sometimes, certainly, it is an occasion for something a little declamatory or half-sincere, as in some of his most famous pieces, like those to the mouse or the daisy. In the latter poem Burns is not free, save for half a dozen admirable stanzas, from a suspicion of

strain, any more than Chaucer, in his treatment of the same flower, is free from a suspicion of exquisite convention. The comparison of the plough-torn daisy to the artless victim of misplaced confidence and to the simple bard himself is a piece of rhetorical emotion. He is best when he describes without such afterthoughts. Carlyle noted the painting of the torrent in *The Brigs of Ayr*; where 'haunted Garpal' is

> Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spotting thowes;
> In mony a torrent down the snaw-broo rowes;
> While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,
> Sweep dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
> And from Glenbuck, down to the Ratton-key,
> Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
> Then down ye 'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
> And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.

This passage is but one out of many; and Burns is equally sensitive to the happiness of rapid and yet peaceful water. He sees the burn 'wimpling' through the glen, straying round a rocky scaur, and gives us all its glitter and musical motion:

> Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
> Wi' bickerin, dancin dazzle;
> Whyles cookit underneath the braes
> Below the spreading hazel
> Unseen that night.

But he does not speak of mountains or of solitudes, which he does not visit. His country is low and rolling and fat—Ayrshire and thereabouts. It is not thickly peopled, except with wild creatures, and of these he knows all the sounds. He hears the curlews call and the paitricks whir and the bitterns roar and the corncrakes clamour. He also knows the colour of the holiday dresses, and catches the glitter of the silks and scarlets on the women 'skelping barefoot' to the Holy Fair. Transient lights do not escape him; the greedy glower of the elder at his twopence in the plate, or the moonbeams glancing through every chink in Alloway Kirk. Everything is seen in movement; he has comparatively few pictures of 'still life.' Things flash by, or the wind sweeps the voices along. The pace of excited actual existence, jovial or angry or rueful, is given by Burns as by few other poets. Blake has the same swift energy, but he sees other things, or sees them otherwise; with a rim of rainbow about them, even when they belong to this earth. But both Blake and Burns perceive, in a fashion that contrasts with Cowper and Gray and Thomson, who sit down before the object, or stroll past it, and linger on their words and elaborate their observa-

tions. This swift method goes back far in Scottish verse, and is found again and again from Dunbar to Fergusson, but in Burns it is pre-eminent.

The same gift is seen in his representations of animals. He does not merely love them, but knows them ; he does not merely feel wrath for them, or see them in a kind of splendour, like Blake, or treat them with a humorous feminine tenderness, like Cowper. His sheep are persons ; he is a farmer, and knows them by their faces. His old ewe, his old mare, are not mere types. Maggie is a classic old mare, with as definite traits as a human being :

> Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
> Ye ne'er was donsie ;
> But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
> An' unco sonsie.

He has, too, the hard sense of the peasant, and never takes the brutes too seriously ; unless we except his sentimentalising over the field-mouse, where he is thinking of himself more than of that other plaything of fortune ; but even there he is saved by his banter. In *The Twa Dogs*, indeed, Cæsar and Luath are not so much dogs as shrewd men, a travelled valet and a cotter, comparing notes ; but they are also admirably drawn as dogs.

He is thus, as it were, the novelist of the animals, and he applies the same gift to his friends, enemies, and acquaintance. It comes to him from native Scots tradition, as well as from his English reading. He has the ' devouring eye and portraying hand ' that Emerson remarked in Carlyle, and his hand is kept steady by the requirements of rhyme. His personages come out clear in a line or phrase, which tells all that need be known, or was ever to tell, of

> Rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
> The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin !

or of Matthew Henderson the sportsman. This worthy is described indirectly, and we know, from the kindly jesting artifice of the elegy, what he was like :

> Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals,
> Ye fisher herons, watching eels ;

and from the ending :

> But by thy honest turf I 'll wait,
> Thou man of worth !
> And mourn the ae best fellow's fate
> E'er lay in earth !

We can almost reconstruct Burns's circle from his poetry; Sillar, Lapraik, Hamilton, and a dozen more, as well as the elders and preachers, so sternly engraved and grotesquely displayed as if by a *comic* Dante, fill the gallery; and the old Scots practice of versified compliment or invective is here trained and consummated. Everything, too, is individual and real. The persons and places are actual, not general or invented. The insignificance of William Fisher ('Holy Willie') or of David Sillar or Lapraik does not hurt the permanence of the art that records them. The subject of a portrait by an Old Master does not much matter. Scott also drew from certain originals, when he chose, in his novels; but Burns preserves and publishes the real names both of friend and victim. And his ploughmen, elders, sportsmen, or drunkards are just themselves; they are not seen, like Michael or the Pedlar in Wordsworth's stories, as types of mankind at large.

In this way he brings new classes of men into the field of vision; thus continuing, in a poetic-satiric spirit, the work of the eighteenth-century novel-writers, though he is under no obligation to them. He sees men with a slighter sense of their dramatic interplay, of the story and the action, than Fielding; but, in recompense, with a familiarity and equality which Fielding, who is all the while consciously and admirably a gentleman, does not affect or know. Nor does Burns portray only the peasant class; the factor, the gauger, the retailer, sit to him; also the liberal-minded lawyer, Gavin Hamilton, who 'was prosecuted by the Session for causing his servants to dig new potatoes in the garden on the last Lord's Day of July 1787'; and, over against him, the resounding roaring preachers, Black Russell, or Moodie, who 'clears the points of faith Wi' rattlin and wi' thumpin.' All these are newcomers, not precisely into Scots verse, but into British literature at large. Herein Burns is like a maker of memoirs who puts his acquaintance into a printed book during their lifetime. Pope did the same thing, usually in a spirit of hatred. Burns hates as hard as Pope, though without his mendacity, inhumanity, or hoarded spite; hates in a right, healthy spirit of hating; openly, that is, and ruthlessly and often, it would seem, deservedly; his railing elders are cut as clear as Thersites in the *Iliad*. He invents new varieties of contempt, and new accents for it. He is mock-deferential, and unbearably and irresistibly familiar, in his lines to the Prince Regent:

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I 'm tauld ye 're driving rarely ;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie
By night or day.

He is merciless, like a mocking-bird, to the elders who exhort the young minister in *The Ordination*, and inform him—

That Stipend is a carnal weed
He takes but for the fashion ;

while, in the *Address to the Unco Guid or the Rigidly Righteous*, scorn melts down into remonstrance and a plea for pity. Or he shows no contempt at all, but a jaunty defiant kindliness, mixed with posturing, as in his *Welcome* to his unlawfully-begotten daughter. But always, when he despises or praises, it is not society at large, or mere classes ; he has in his eye known and remembered persons who keep emerging, and not composite general pictures of the fanatic or hypocrite.

In the same fashion the places named in Burns's poems bear real names, and he is sometimes as much a 'local poet' as Cowper or Wordsworth. Galston Moor and Mossgiel and the 'Brigs of Ayr' are there with their physiognomies, like Weston Underwood or Loughrigg Fell ; always peopled and alive, for Burns is seldom alone with them. He does not, like Wordsworth, look on these spots as part of his own past, or as having helped to make his soul. He is part of them, rather than they of him ; he is one of the persons who lived among them, and the one who truly saw them. They are drawn rapidly, in sketches or impressions, in a phrase or line, and decisively dismissed. The pace is a rattling one, but it does not blur the sharpness of the imagery.

Burns also gives a truer account and picture of himself than any of his critics, who are left behind drawing inferences and measuring verdicts. In each of his moods, and not least in his rhetorical factitious ones, he is true to the mood, and expresses it completely ; and so exhibits, even when he does not know, himself. 'Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool' says much in few words. His bombast, when he writes to Mrs. M'Lehose, is real, and his humility, when he wishes that he could rival Ramsay or Gilbertfield, is real also. He knows all his own vices, and boasts of them or laments them with equal

sincerity. He hoards and keeps back nothing; he has, except in matters of form and finish, no second thoughts; and he has no real romance. '*Il est passionné, non romanesque.*'[1] He has no sense of wonder, beyond his easy shudder at the ghostly and supernatural; he exploits the terrors of the clerical or popular devil with a kindly flout at the legend. He does not deal in the half-said, or in poetic suggestion of the kind that we meet in Coleridge. The edges are always clear and the colours definite, like his mind. If he has not the magic of the underworld, he has plenty of the magic of life and motion and sudden vistas. He seldom cares for history, though he is in the midst of its memorials, and though of song and tune and custom and proverb he is a treasure-house.

There is not much more unity in the nature of Burns than there is in the population of a village. There is, it is true, an artistic unity in his work seen as a whole; but this disguises, or rather expresses, many moods and personalities. He is a Jacobite, and a democrat; anti-clerical, and passionately pious; ribald, and ethical; pompously braggart, and temperately manly. To deal in such antitheses is not to shirk the problem of his character; on the contrary, to try and draw them out into a harmony is to falsify it. This is why he is so interesting. He is, or was, half Scotland. His first ruling passion is thoroughly to fathom each feeling, and to perceive each trait, as it comes. He does not count the cost; or rather he does so afterwards, and then he represents one feeling the more. His variety of style and music is but the embodiment of this multiformity, for his other and corresponsive ruling passion is to find the words, the tune, that finally expresses the thing before him or within him.

Besides this thickly-peopled vision of the men and women who are near him, Burns brings into his feeling towards them a new ingredient, which is partly of his own day. He is called a poet of the Revolution, who chants the claims of the peasant to a hearing; 'a man 's a man for a' that'; and he certainly did this, and was willing to suffer in person, rather uncouthly, for hoisting his red flag.[2] His early Jacobite sentiment, more poetic than political, was overlaid, though not obliterated, after 1790. But it was not the revolution-fever that made him democratic. The Scot had always known that a man 's a man for a' that. The disregard of persons and ranks is in the blood of the people, queerly crossed with a simple-minded, and sometimes excessive, respect for descent and prestige. Burns

simply found the words for the sentiment of equality; although, in a flash of just self-criticism, he said that the song in which they occur, 'Is there for honest poverty,' was 'not really poetry.' The idea of the rights of man, or any general idea, must not be thought of as sinking far into him. He is not a poet of ideas, and this is another trait that separates him from most of the romantic writers.

His crusade against the Kirk tyranny is more deeply inspired. This ugly abuse drove Burns to write his best and most undying satire. But his animus is made up of various elements. It is not merely that of a man whose amours are taken publicly to task by the local inquisition, to which he must submit; not merely the recoil of a wild-blooded and uncontrolled poet against clerical discipline. It is more than the natural cry of one who speaks for the 'pagan, free-living, lewd, Scots world.' The spirit is not at all that of a Voltairian, or of Tom Paine. Burns, being a tolerably representative Scot, is something of a theologian. It was more than personal friendship that made him espouse and celebrate the 'New Lights,'[1] a local or provincial denomination, or rather group, of less rigid tenets than those of the ruling Calvinists. Burns praises these moderate clergy of Arminian tendencies, and rails at their adversaries. He had himself been bred an alien to the stricter articles of predestination and election. The clear-headed *Manual of Religious Belief* compiled by his father for his benefit, and the theological text-books that he is known to have read, are liberal in drift. Burns lays no stress on Trinitarian doctrine; his words are sometimes Arian in complexion; often they go further, and are those of a vaguely fervent deism. Less than that he never believed; and some of his pious breathings are of the true eighteenth-century, deistic stamp: 'O thou great unknown Power! thou Almighty God, who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality!' This question is not without its bearing on his use of language. His devoutness, which is undoubted although fitful, takes high-flown Anglified form in some of his letters to Mrs. M'Lehose. In *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, under an occasionally unreal, or rather uncongenial phraseology, there is a genuine pulse of piety; and, as he tells us, he had 'greeted by his father's fireside' whilst composing it. The workmanship of the English parts of this piece has been sometimes underestimated. At other times he would turn out, in uncomfortable poetical or rhetorical diction, his utterances of revulsion and repentance, in which the devotion, though

honest enough, has gone rather hectic. But all these moods are only moods, and he never turns any one facet towards us for long.

If Burns shares many traits with the English romantic writers—his love of colour, his eye for nature, his care for common humanity, his rebel independence, and his freshness of rhythm ; and if, on the other hand, he is not in their debt, being, indeed, rather anti-romantic than romantic in temper ; where, then, does he get these traits ? The answer, already anticipated, is that he got them in Scotland. They were not new at all in Scotland, or in Scottish verse ; they had already found lively vernacular expression, even whilst the spirit of classicism was dominating England. Burns, it has now long been seen, struck scarcely a chord that had not been sounded some time or other on the Scottish lyre or pipes. Some chords, indeed, he seldom sounded at all ; the recovery of the folk-ballad he left to Scott. But the vivid passion for natural things had been present in northern verse, with long enfeeblings and intermissions, ever since the fifteenth century. The tenderly satiric fashion of addressing beasts and men was familiar to Burns, not only from older native verse, but from that of his immediate forerunner Robert Fergusson, who died in 1774, when Burns was a boy, and to whom Burns inscribed the memorial stone in the Canongate burying-place. His artistic debt to this poet, his elder brother in gaiety, misery, and poetry, has often been described ; it is shown, for instance, how the measure and machinery, the mazy motion and the crowded coupling life, of Fergusson's *Leith Races* are remembered in *The Holy Fair* ; and how *The Farmer's Ingle* suggested the framework of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, though the sentiment is much more profoundly felt by Burns. So, too, the friendly or derisive epistle in verse was a long-standing form, which Burns took over, expanded, varied, and made into an instrument of widest compass, for the expression of insolent, button-holing colloquy, or of stentorian abuse, or of chaff, or of confidential gentle talk. Metrical scholars [1] have traced with care the origins and descent of Burns's favourite staves. The chief of them, the six-lined verse built on two rhymes, goes back to Old French and Provençal, through a long intervening history in Scots, and is also abundantly found in mediæval English poetry. Burns, by choice, thinks in this measure ; he describes, muses, sneers, reviles, toasts, and even maunders in it. Its commonest movement is a forward rush on the triple and repeated

rhyme, stopped and clinched by the short line introducing the new rhyme :

> Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
> And say, ' How can you e'er propose,
> You who ken hardly verse frae prose,
> To mak a sang ? '

Then the other two lines, long and short, on the same two rhymes, face round and give the answer, or complete the idea, with a fling-up of the heels :

> But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
> Ye 're maybe wrang.

Or those two lines are an afterthought :

> Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin !
> Its silly wa's the win's are strewin !
> An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
> O' foggage green !
> An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
> Baith snell an' keen !

Or there is no turn, or ' break ' at all, and the whole runs in a single breath :

> I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
> Has broken Nature's social union,
> An' justifies that ill opinion
> Which makes thee startle
> At me, thy poor earth-born companion
> An' fellow-mortal !

Such changes are rung without end ; but the requickening of the rhythmical pulse in the fifth line, and the clanging finish in the sixth, are everywhere. The longer measures, also historic, and either borrowed direct or adapted by Burns, of *The Holy Fair* and of the *Epistle to Davie* ;—the first with its single-line tag, or ' bob-wheel,' harping on the same rhyme throughout in a relentless jaunty way (' Fu crump that day ' —' by night or day '), and the second with its four line-tag built on difficult ' internal rhymes,' also jaunty ;—these measures, in his hands, show an almost insolent ease and mastery of technique, like that of a champion jig-dancer ; and the clap of the sandal on the ground at the close is irresistibly suggested. Much more could be said on the metres used by Burns ; for example, on the *double* initial sandal-clap in *The Kirk's Alarm*, with the rhyme repeated just when it seems forgotten : the effect, as before, being

slightly diabolical, like the subsequent reduplication of the longer line :

> Dr. Mac ! Dr. Mac !
> You should stretch on a rack,
> To strike wicked Writers wi' terror :
> To join faith and sense,
> Upon onie pretence,
> Was heretic, damnable error—
> Dr. Mac !
> 'Twas heretic, damnable error.

And for quick, striding narrative, or satiric enumeration, Burns often uses and reinvigorates the old rhyming octosyllabic, as in *Tam o' Shanter* or *The Twa Dogs* ; and the long heroic couplet, as in *The Brigs of Ayr*, yields a piquant mixture of Pope-like balance and vernacular freedom. But on all this many have written, and well ; and it only need be added that his songs are the clearest proof of this originality of verbal tune, united with dependence on tradition ; being usually founded either on airs, or on words, or on both words and airs, that had long been in use by the people and were the natural voice of its moods of pastime, indignation, or sorrow.

No such legacy of poetic form can be one of form alone. The soul of Burns, we know, was itself an inheritance. That tone of fatal familiarity, for one thing, before which everything goes down, is deep in the northern character, and is a feature, it is not too much to say, even of its religious history. If Burns is a free-living peasant amorist, living at first by semi-polygamous village custom, full of passion, blatancy, fickleness, tenderness, fun, true and sham sentiment, unchivalry, repentances, and domestic feeling, and if he enjoys and suffers accordingly, well, it is idle to pity him singly ; we must take generations of his peasant forbears under the wing of our patronage or condonation, and praise or blame Scotland. He is, no doubt, not the only kind of peasant, nor does he show us every kind. Scott has shown us others, in David Deans, and again in Mause Headrigg. But Burns, on the whole, is a far more superb figure, and represents a richer type, than any which it lay within the plan or perhaps the ability of Scott to portray. No two artists can ever really interfere with each other ; least of all two such as Scott and Burns, who cover so much canvas between them ; but it is instructive to see them at work on the same kind of scene. It is hardly fair, indeed, to read *The Jolly Beggars*,[1] Burns's longest, best harmonised, most magnificent production, perfectly

harmonious in its uproar, and without one flagging moment in its ever-varying *bravura*, immediately before passing to the humours of the middle-class topers in *Guy Mannering*. For Pleydell and his companions are ready to go back to their offices, and make money next morning, and litigate; they never 'whistle owre the lave o't'; they respect the main chance too religiously; claret is their interlude, and an unruffled conscience helps them through the day. The jolly beggars have no such afterthought; they must pad the roads, and sleep under the hedge, till the next orgy; their whole real life is in that evening chorus; it is not likely that Edie Ochiltree will be among them, though not impossible. Their songs (which Scott himself praised admirably) are the most splendid literature possible of its own order. Burns sees them, as Will Waterproof saw London, in 'a kind of glory,' and it is thus that they see themselves. This is as different as can be from the tolerant light of Scott's comedy of humours, with its easy cunning gradations. A merrymaking of bourgeois is described by a great dramatic genius, who is also a gentleman. A merrymaking of tramps is described by a great lyric genius, who is also a ploughman. In the first case there is a profound perception of the subject; in the second, something much nearer to an identification with the subject. It is, of course, here or elsewhere, nothing to Burns that his subject is not a lady's or a children's, or even a gentleman's, affair. He will write about anything, whether it be fit for publication or not; and is said to have referred to his own 'Cloaciniads.' He must share such reproaches, once more, with the national muse. All these moods, in their quick-revolving play and recurrence, make up both his actual and his imaginative life. We like some imperfections in Burns better than others. He had a big waste-heap in his nature; indeed, something like a principle of self-destruction, which must be held to have shortened his days and his happiness: a visitation which it is enough to note without proceeding to the insolence of excessive compassion, and without raking overmuch into the detail of his amours and excesses; a procedure, after all, that is only profitable when some libel has to be refuted.

If we ask what Burns represents, above all, in the life and temper of his country, and what, therefore, is his essence, it is, to borrow a phrase from a later singer, *the freedom of the natural soul*. The new thing in him is the completeness of that freedom, and the perfection with which it is expressed.

The eighteenth-century poets, in general, and the first founders of the new verse, Crabbe and Cowper—nay, even their great successors, Wordsworth and Coleridge, have not this; if they win freedom, it is not of this kind. Blake has it, and Byron and Shelley have it afterwards. This kind of freedom need not imply revolutionary or explosive tenets, though it often goes along with them; a man like Chaucer, a man like Fielding may have it, where no question of opinion arises. The Scottish nature has it, except where artificially bound down or cramped in some fashion. But the writers of England, whom Burns in his youth perused, have it not. They are limited and controlled; around writers like Thomson and Gray, admirable as they are, stand all kinds of abstractions—Reason, Decorum, Custom, Virtue, sentinelling in arms at the four corners of their field. Social ordinance is implied in the outlook of Crabbe and Cowper; the self-prescription of a lofty, regulated life is everywhere in Wordsworth; within those borders he works; often with supreme success, but within them. Even Coleridge, the freest mind of his time, is haunted by the phantom of that order and self-possession to which he could not in his life attain. Blake, on the other hand, likes to think that these old sentinels go over as ninepins at his thrust. Indeed, he is stronger herein than Burns, because he is quite happy in his freedom, and never repents, having no cause for headaches; whereas Burns has many headaches, having courted nature's slap in the face, and versifies them in moderately good lines; and is indeed all the more a Scot for that. But he regains his poetic superiority over Blake, not only by his more constantly perfect form, but because he has more of plain humanity in him—more, at least, of the earth, of the faun, of the orgiast; and he gives us their poetry. Blake is far more moral than Burns; only his morality is high and imaginative, not that of custom and the sentinels. Burns, instead, has the right 'goatfoot music' in his blood and in his verses; in *Tam o' Shanter*, in *The Jolly Beggars*, in the lines *To a Louse*, in *Death and Doctor Hornbook*; these are among the best things that he has done.

That is not to say they are of the highest kind of poetry. Only, in reading them, one forgets the distinction of high and low in the sense of their perfection. They show us not only the 'freedom,' but the 'natural soul' itself; they show us the soul of dirt, and drink, and careless roaring laughter, and of the sudden lust, and the sweating frenzied quickening dance, and the drunken chorus, and the profane and greasy

and unseemly catch. But if this were all, we should hardly talk of 'freedom.' It is in the power to escape from these things, and then to escape back to them, nat the freedom consists. Burns is often a servant of Pan; but he is also a tender observer, an arch-friend and comrade, and a hater of hypocrisy. He is also a moralist, in no dry way, but in his own emotional, convincing way; he sees how 'illicit love' may 'petrify the feeling,' and celebrates the piety of the fireside. It is not that he pulls up in the middle of a wild dance, and corrects himself, and tries to exorcise Pan; but that he feels different things at different times, and expresses each of them thoroughly. That one man, in the course of time, should arise to give full utterance to all these feelings, and that too in song, is surely no immoderate allowance. But for him, they would not have been sung, or not sung thus, and that complex tune would have been missing from the endless *opera omnia* of the poets. That the life of the singer should be broken up and cut short, was likely enough; but we are talking of poetry, and not of such consequences, nor are we here deploring the weakness of human will or nature's want of scruple in shattering her instruments.

III

There is nothing new or mysterious in Burns, except his perfection; and even here the secret is an open one; it is his power to represent everything, every feeling, as it comes, and just as it is, and to have done with it. In saying he is a classic, we do not mean merely that he has left verse that endures, though that is true; nor that he owes something to the narrowly classical school of Pope, though that is true also; but rather that he reminds us of the antique; that he represents real life and feeling with the clearness, rightness, and beauty of the antique; and that this is true in the same degree of no other British writer during the romantic period. It is the characteristic of Burns; it is why he is so deeply satisfactory, and why we come back to him again and again, and why we feel that when he is as remote in time as Theocritus is to-day, people will take the trouble to learn his language, and will treat him as an ancient writer who perennially gives pleasure and entertainment; so that Burns, perhaps, will be part of some far future Renaissance; and all this because of his form. Such prophesying is easy, and may sound cheap enough; but during the century that has passed

since Burns wrote, this perfection of his, this power of survival, have asserted themselves already.

Carlyle said in his lovely, early, elegiac prose:

> While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves, this little Valclusa fountain will also arrest our eye, for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship; bursts from the depths of the earth, with a full gushing current, into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters and muse among its rocks and pines!

The imagery need not lead us astray. 'Valclusa fountain' suggests Petrarch, and 'cunning workmanship,' and studious finish; the earliest modern equivalent, it may be, to antique rightness and beauty of form; but then Petrarch does not, like Burns, represent the real life of men, and indeed, for all his pains, hardly represents a real life of his own. Near to Burns in such qualities comes Wordsworth; not when, as in *Laodamia*, he is deliberately antique, but when he is telling the tale of *Michael* or *The Brothers*. There, indeed, he is perfect, right, simple, and enduring, although he steeps his story in reflection and theory. But it is curious that Burns, at his best, writes in a style that answers better than Wordsworth's own to the description of poetry that Wordsworth himself put forward, namely, that it should be written in 'the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation,' and be 'purified of all rational causes of disgust and dislike.' Burns uses such a language, when he is really himself and is not practising English eighteenth-century diction; that is, he uses it for most of the time. But he unites it with clearness, and beauty, and rightness, and blithe humour; it comes easily to him, as he tells us in lines which themselves show his command of it. He has just named Jean, his wife:

> O, how that Name inspires my style!
> The words come skelpin, rank an' file,
> Amaist before I ken!
> The ready measure rins as fine,
> As Phœbus and the famous Nine
> Were glowrin owre my pen.
> My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
> Till ance he 's fairly het;
> And then he 'll hilch, an' stilt, an' jimp,
> And rin an unco fit;
> But least then, the beast then
> Should rue this hasty ride,
> I 'll light now, and dight now
> His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

These powers come out when Burns seems most slapdash and spontaneous; and the lines to James Smith give us, no doubt, his real and habitual mood:

> Some rhyme a neebor's name to lash;
> Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
> Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
> An' raise a din;
> For me, an aim I never fash;
> I rhyme for fun.

But we must not talk loosely about the antique; what do we mean by it? There is no Greek or Latin Burns. To come nearest to one, we must seek for some poet, or poets, who write, first of all, in what is called dialect, that is, not in the central and predominant idiom of their civilisation; who use this dialect for a homely purpose, to present real life, the life of homely people; whose form is rapid, passionate, beautiful, seemingly unstudied, and yet quite right; and who are personal, who are not afraid of telling us of their own loves and hatreds—the hatreds are essential—and who let their dignity take care of itself; who, in a word, with all their art, leave us with the sense that they are forces and pieces of nature, and who do not talk about being artists, but leave that business to their expositors. Well, Catullus has some of these traits—the speed, the passion, the lack of dignity, the personal tinge, the monumental form; and Theocritus has some others, the dialect, the gentle vivacious play of homely life, the love of nature and fun. Both of them have, in different ways, the appropriate art; both give the real language of men in impeccable shape. We need not touch on the qualities in which they excel Burns or differ from him; but he is something like a compound of the two; half-lyrical, half-portraying; with the same hatred of surplusage, and the same rightness. He came to these qualities, not at all by knowing the ancients, and not only by his native gift, but also by inheriting the long tradition of poetry, which he took up, and crowned, and eclipsed;—the tradition of Dunbar, and Ramsay, and Fergusson, and a hundred nameless poets, or poets who only have bequeathed a song and a bare name; so that he is not only a classic, but the classic of his country.

Outside the drama, Burns is perhaps the swiftest in movement of our poets, as Spenser and Wordsworth are the slowest. No man travels through an action, or a gamut of feeling, in fewer words. The beginning of a verse is out of sight ere the end is reached. The pace of *Tam o' Shanter* or *The Holy Fair*

is unequalled. Scott comes next, but even he warms to his work more slowly, and takes longer over it. Burns is ready at once. His is not the light gliding step of Chaucer, who covers the ground quick and imperceptibly. In Burns you hear the musical clatter of the horse's hoofs. In fourteen lines of *The Twa Dogs* he carries his young gallant through France, Spain, Italy, and Germany (where he seeks a water-cure), whipping him well as he goes. In eight lines are recounted the landmarks, each denoting a violent death, past which Tam o' Shanter 'skelpit on.'

> By this time he was cross the ford,
> Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
> And past the birks and meikle stane,
> Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
> And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
> Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
> And near the thorn, aboon the well,
> Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.

This makes us feel, like Tam o' Shanter, 'glorious.' So, too, the brook in *Hallowe'en* rushes down to the valley in a single stanza, and the endless sports and charms of the occasion succeed each other faster than in the reality. It is the same when Burns is stirred with anger or sorrow. The satire on Holy Willie and the tent-preachers runs like a fired train; even his gentler lines, like those on the daisy, do not linger. In the *Cotter's Saturday Night* he affects for a time the slow pensive movement of his Spenserian models (whom, rather than Spenser, he is studying); but gets impatient and breaks away.

His compositions are all short; only a few of them are of middle length, like *Tam o' Shanter* and *The Vision*; the longest, *The Jolly Beggars*, is barely three hundred lines. The descriptive and narrative pieces are often under a hundred lines. Here again Burns is an artist; he knows just how much he can do without loss of power, or wandering from his gift. When he is diffuse, it is nearly always when he falls into the wrong sort of southern English; *The Vision* suffers in this way as it goes on. Using Scots, he never halts. When he is in the vein, he seems neither short nor long, because the ear and mind of the reader are alive and at the stretch and lose count of time. No one gets so much life into so little room.

But Burns's method is different in different kinds of writing. The *Epistles* do not go straight forward, but chat rapidly, and circle round the subject, and end when they please, like an actual letter. The satiric and bitter poems, on the contrary,

like *Holy Willie's Prayer*, are deliberately concentrated for effect, and the poet leaves off while he is still angry—does not wait till he is placable. *Tam o' Shanter* is his masterpiece in composition in a single metre, perfectly begun and conducted and rounded off; *The Jolly Beggars* is his masterpiece in a combination of metres, alternately descriptive and lyrical, a roaring and yet accordant clamour of changing voices. Here the passion runs so high that a longer poem at the same tension would be physically impossible; Burns feels that, and leaves off before there is danger of an ebb. This it is to be classical; and several sayings of Burns explain his method as an artist:

> I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose. . . . All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of laborious correction. . . . The rough material of fine writing is certainly the gift of genius; but I as firmly believe that the workmanship is the united effort of pains, attention, and repeated trial.

Burns's manuscripts, and his comments to Johnson and Thomson on the text of his songs, show his fidelity to this creed. It may be connected, on one side, with his study of Pope and Addison; on another, it recalls that of his contemporary Blake, who, far off in London, was preaching the gospel of execution, or of firm determinate outline. Burns's thrift and precision are among his greater attributes as a poet. It was long before the English romantic writers learned to avoid superfluity. Blake came to forget his own lesson; Wordsworth and Coleridge often achieved thrift and precision, but they are never long safe. Byron attained those qualities in a few lyrics and in satire. Shelley had them not by divine gift, but learned them by practice in his craft. Keats learned them soon, and was able to 'load every rift with ore.' Never sure of them in his prose, Burns is always sure of them in his Scottish verse. On the whole, he is more economical than any of the southern poets, and produces, better than any of them, the effect of ease by intense labour.

There is no need to note other differences. There are no veils upon his style; neither Blake's veil of strangeness and shadow, which makes us feel that the images, 'determinate' as they are, are also symbols; nor yet Shelley's veil of light and air, which leaves the words themselves almost impalpable. Burns's greatest qualities, of outline, precision, and concreteness, are alien to such achievements. And, it may be said again,

he had little definable influence upon English poets after him. The fountain has been there to sparkle eternally before them, but hardly to drink from. Wordsworth was in his debt, and paid the debt in Burns's own stanza, with sincere honour and strong feeling, if with a certain slightly misplaced compassion; but in the poems where he does so he has not learned Burns's lesson as an artist. It is in Scotland that we must seek for the influence of Burns; and there it will be seen to be powerful, nay, almost overpowering, like too strong an air; and he produced no great disciples, partly because the life that he recorded was beginning to fade down while he wrote.

IV

To pass from Burns's poems—his epistles, satires, and narratives—to his songs is to pass to something purer and more piercing and aerial, less tied to traditional tales, real persons, known legends, local incidents, and all the harsh tough fibres of Scottish character and the oddities of country physiognomy. It is to pass from the earth to the air or to the fire. For even when the matter of the songs is actually of that familiar sort, rank or homely, it has wandered wider on the lips of the people; and the poet makes it universal by his treatment, and sublimates it. He captures the whole 'breath and finer spirit' of a nation which, more than all others, is inconceivable without its songs. And he works up those floating words and airs into something that is more and not less enduring than their current originals, and which, in its turn, becomes the true possession of the folk. No one has ever done this for England, where there is not the like material to work upon; nor even for Ireland, where the material is far more abundant; the achievement of Moore, though of high credit, being in another direction, and omitting too much of the Irish soul. Burns was near enough to the songs, as Scott was to the ballads, of the country, to work exactly in their spirit; and was also so much above them as to put them through a kind of purgation, to rid them of their *concreta labes*, and to disengage their perpetual essence. Thus he really became the singing soul of his people. Scotland, like the isle that was both Caliban's and Prospero's, is 'full of sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not'—and that sometimes do hurt, with all their sweetness, like wicked arrows. It is also full of wandering words to those airs; words which at times live in their purest form in the mouth of the people, but are oftener written down in black-

letter and chapbook, in forms full of beauty and imperfection. Many had been saved by previous collectors and poets, or trimmed at times by editors like Ramsay into modish eighteenth-century style. Of all this material Burns was the repository. Scholars have patiently examined his sources and methods, of which only a few distinctive examples [1] can be cited.

Nearly two hundred songs were sent by Burns to his two employers; some in 1787 to the unlettered engraver James Johnson, for his *Musical Museum*; others in 1792 for the *Scottish Airs* of George Thomson; and many more he scattered broadcast. In the *Museum* he was left very free, and was virtually editor, and he was then at his best; when he contributed to *Scottish Airs* his finer hour was past, although we still come on such things as *Wandering Willie*, *Duncan Gray*, 'O saw ye bonie Lesley,' and 'Scots Wha Hae.' Nearly all the pieces he treated are by nameless and untraceable authors. His procedure may be first exemplified in *Auld Lang Syne*. He writes:

> Is not the Scotch phrase 'Auld Langsyne' exceedingly expressive? . . . There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul. . . . The following song—the old song of the olden time, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.

The refrain, in fact, had often been in print, twice in the eighteenth century; once in the form, which Burns would seem to have seen:

> On old long syne,
> On old long syne, my jo,
> On old long syne;
> That thou canst never once reflect
> On old long syne.

The first line, 'Should old acquaintance be forgot,' exists in another printed version, assigned to Ramsay. How much Burns took from the 'old man'—if indeed he existed—and how he added to it, we shall never know; but we can be sure that he stripped away any lustreless patches, resembling those in the printed versions, and substituted his own gold. The old man may have had a purer oral version than any extant in print, or Burns may have invented the old man, and taken the refrain of one version and the opening of the other, and written all that comes between.

In 'O, my luve is like a red, red rose,' Burns took the germ of

each of the four stanzas from one or other of three preceding songs; examples of which, though they are possibly not those that he saw, remain. One blackletter runs:

Her cheeks are like the roses
That blossom fresh in June;
O, she 's like a new-strung instrument
That 's newly put in tune.

The jejune 'That blossom fresh' appears, under Burns's hand, as 'that 's newly sprung'; in the rest the metre is mended, the repetition 'new,' 'newly,' is cut away, and the phrase re-created to

O, my luve is like the melody
That 's sweetly play'd in tune.

The next stanza has a traceable original in this:

The seas they shall run dry,
And rocks melt into sands;
Then I 'll love you still, my dear,
When all these things are done.

Burns corrects the rhyme, turns the 'run dry' into Scots, and retains the tender extravagance:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

The last verse has for possible ancestor a good ringing stanza, in a different poem, with a 'repeat' which Burns has to clear away in order to keep his own measure:

Altho' I go a thousand miles,
I vow thy face to see,
Altho' I go ten thousand miles,
I 'll come again to thee, dear love,
I 'll come again to thee.

This becomes a long-drawn plaint mingled with the promise:

And fare thee weel, my only love,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Again, the noblest of Burns's, perhaps of all, Jacobite ditties, 'It was a' for our rightfu' king,' one of the great achievements of romantic patriot song in any form of English, was suggested by an old and admirable poem which opens thus:

The cold winter is past and gone, and now comes in the spring,
And I am one of the King's life-guards, and must go fight for my King,
My dear,
I must go fight for my King;

and closes thus:

The trooper turn'd himself about all on the Irish shore,
He has given the bridle reins a shake, saying, Adieu for evermore,
My dear,
Adieu for evermore.

This old poem is a dialogue, in which the lady says that she will dress in man's attire, and go along with her lover to the wars, and tear her hair and snood for him in mourning when he is gone; but the trooper will not let her, and bids her farewell. This stereotype Burns discards; he leaves the speaker watching and thinking by night, but he retains the thrilling low tones of the repeat 'my dear' at the end of every verse. He puts the last stanza into the middle, builds out from it, and in his own last stanza supplies the new keynote, the intolerable touch of home:

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep,
I think on him that 's far awa,
The lee-lang night, and weep,
My dear—
The lee-lang night and weep.

Such ways of working could be shown at endless length. Burns took whatever served him, and did what he would with it, with unfailing instinct; and also, as his manuscripts often show, gave to it a ceaseless care and revision which is most striking in some of the most artless-seeming and reeled-off ditties. 'O saw ye bonie Lesley' is a piece of gallantry of his own, in honour of a real Miss Leslie Baillie, whom he accompanied, with her father, on a ride southward. The song is, in his own phrase, a parody of an old one, *Bonnie Lizzie Baillie*, so that the surname and the tune were really all he had to work upon.

To classify these songs, or even the best of them, is hardly possible, any more than we can classify the airs that go with them. In dozens of them the Northern Pan is evoked, with his extraordinary leer; he puts his face so close to yours that your dignity is gone and you feel his breath; he is chucklingly familiar; he measures your tolerance at the moment, and delights to go beyond it; then he dances back, singing, to watch the effect. In pure mischief, he will provide a

drawing-room version, which is still roguish, but presentable; the two forms of *Duncan Gray* can be consulted for this device. Suddenly he vanishes, and a woman's voice is heard piercingly:

Near me, near me,
Laddie, lie near me!
Lang hae I lain my lane,—
Laddie, lie near me!

This feminine long-drawn call is heard often enough; 'Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie!' 'Wilt thou be my dearie?' or the male voice is heard in reply, in a bass:

O, this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be:
Weel ken I my ain lassie—
Kind love is in her e'e.

Or Burns's own voice is raised, in honour of his wife; 'Of a' the airts the wind can blaw' was written on his honeymoon, with only a melody to work upon. Another group, the convivial, is the lyric counterpart of *Scotch Drink* and the like, which are formal poems not meant for singing but for saying. 'O, guid ale comes,' and 'The Deil's awa wi' th' exciseman' are of this chanted order; but they are not so numerous as other kinds. Of the Jacobite songs the greatest has been quoted, but there are many more; 'Awa', Whigs, awa'!' and 'O'er the water to Charlie,' and 'Carl, an the King come,' and the resonant 'Ye Jacobites by name,' a good example of Burns's English at its best.

And, at the other extreme from the scurril, stands the literary, rhetorical muse, with 'Turn again, thou fair Eliza,' and 'Thickest Night, surround my dwelling.' We can hardly grudge a few of these things, for they complete, not so delightfully but faithfully, the picture of Burns and his moods, and represent, they also, an artificial but actual element in Scottish song. They are usually in sheer English, and in factitious English too; and what more may here be said about Burns and his lyrics and poems can most profitably take the shape of an attempt to do justice to his English muse, so commonly derided, and to show what is more accurately meant by 'Scots,' as a medium for verse. That is a false and ragged division of his poetry, according to which his English is always inferior and conventional, and Scots his only excellent vehicle.

V

Here, no doubt, is one sort of English, not even good in an assumed style, but bad considered as English of any sort :

> O Thou ! who pour'd the patriotic tide
> That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,
> Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
> Or, nobly, die, the second glorious part.

Unluckily there are hundreds of such instances ; the start is wrong, the movement is factitious, the grammar is amiss, though the sentiment is unassailable ; it is worse than *Rule, Britannia*, which is much to say. The same sort of thing, in mawkish-amorous vein, could, alas, easily be quoted, and would correspond to similar stuff in the prose of the ' Sylvander and Clarinda ' correspondence. But let us pass forward, only staying to deprecate Carlyle's flushed description of the *Ode Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Oswald of Auchencruive*, as something that ' might have been chanted by the furies of Æschylus ' ; whereas such lines as

> Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
> Hangman of creation, mark !

and their sequel, are simply turgid, bogus-sublime eighteenth-century English, absurdly beyond the occasion, which is but the death of a rich miserly old lady. Another sort of English is this :

> From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
> That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad :
> Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
> ' An honest man 's the noblest work of God.'

That is truer, but it is true in a southern tradition, the tradition of Pope or Gray ; to Burns we feel it is only second nature. As he himself saw, ' Scots Wha Hae ' is rhetoric too (if good rhetoric), though the tune is northern. But in which language does he write *To the Toothache* ?

> When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
> Rheumatics gnaw, or colic squeezes,
> Our neebors sympathise to ease us
> Wi' pitying moan ;
> But thee !—thou hell o' a' diseases,
> They mock our groan !

This is not southern, eighteenth-century ' poetic diction ' at all, but it is English truly enough, with a few northern vowels

and curtailments, in a northern metre and temper. Here again is the stanza, quoted already, which is no worse :

> I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
> Has broken Nature's social union,
> An' justifies that ill opinion
> Which makes thee startle
> At me, thy poor earth-born companion
> An' fellow-mortal !

Only one word, and otherwise not even one vowel is in Scots ; yet so strong is the illusion caused by metre and association, that we hear it uttered in the broadest accent. Take another verse with the final tag, from *A Dream* : there is more northern salt in it still, but still no one word that really asks to be translated :

> Guid-mornin to your Majesty !
> May Heaven augment your blisses !
> On ev'ry new birthday ye see,
> A humble poet wishes !
> My Bardship here, at your Levee,
> On sic a day as this is,
> Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
> Amang thae Birthday dresses
> Sae fine this day.

On the other side, with

> A daimen icker in a thrave
> 's a sma request,

or with

> Yet aft a ragged cowte 's been known
> To make a noble aiver ;
> So, ye may doucely fill a throne
> For a' their clish-ma-claver,

we are in presence of a language where many of the important words are foreign, and need the glossary. It is only at this point that 'Scots' ceases to be a purely comparative term ; and it is clear that the ingredients may be mixed in any measure, except that in no sense can a poem be wholly in Scots ; there being no such entire separate language, apart from the Gaelic. The poet's choice, therefore, is often not between English and Scots, but between one sort of English (or British if the term is held more soothing) and another. How far the poem, without being in Scots, is yet Scottish, and not Southron, depends on other considerations besides the vocabulary and spelling, or the pronunciation as shown by the spelling. It depends on the metre and its associations,

for one thing ; is there the true kick-up of the heels, unknown to the southerner ?

> Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
> Wi' rattlin and wi' thumpin;
> Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
> He 's stampin, an' he 's jumpin !

And it depends, more still, on our mental image of the speaker and his Doric sounds and the faces of the cronies around him. The English speech, so the Scot would say, is only a fainter form of the Scots, aspiring to be like it ; and to appease him we will accept that view.

These elementary reflections are only dwelt on, that we may come into sight of a truer judgment upon Burns's prowess in the two languages. Plainly the bisection, still customary, of his talent into that which uses the ' Doric ' well, and that which misuses the English, must be qualified. Some of his songs, and some of the best, the most indigenous, the most peaty, and some of those that go nearest home, contain no words that really require translation ; at most, they contain words in the alternative northern sound and orthography. His noblest lines, ' Had we never loved sae blindly,' are of this kind. ' It was a' for our rightfu' king ' is another instance ; and *Macpherson's Lament*, which stirred Carlyle, and made the face of Tennyson darken with sympathy, is all in English except the word *sturt* ; indeed it is in something like high English, of the old Cavalier style. The fable that the cateran Macpherson fiddled the tune on the way to the gallows is discredited, but the tale is told of an Irishman :

> Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
> Sae dauntingly gaed he,
> He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
> Below the gallows-tree.

That is the refrain ; and the high reckless style is this :

> O, what is death but parting breath ?
> On many a bloody plain
> I 've dared his face, and in this place
> I scorn him yet again !

In others, of course, like *My Hoggie* and *John Anderson*, there is enough of Scots to give the distinguishing tint ; in a thing like *Scroggam* there is much more. The truth is that when Burns starts in the right mood, and in the right key of language, he can be almost equally good whatever proportion of the vernacular he may use. All we can say is, that he is

always safe in 'Scots,' that the very best of his pieces have a large dash of it, and that a single vivid, unforgettable, puzzling word in a stanza is enough to give the colouring. These remarks are meant not to be academic; but to urge that Burns is thus brought nearer to the main stream of our common literature. Our southern share in his glory is made good; and the very freedom and intensity of his natural genius serves to lower, not to stiffen, those barriers of bent and feeling which history and religion have raised over-high between the two branches of our race.

VI

Burns may outshine all the other vernacular Scottish poets[1] of his day; but we must not let him, as painters say, kill them, or we shall miss much that is good and shall also fail to understand Burns. He is by far the greatest force amongst them, and the one secure artist, the only classic; the mass of his excellent work exceeds that of all the rest taken together; and there is hardly a chord in the national soul, known to those others, which he has not struck powerfully. But for all that they are there; their very multitude shows that the voice of Burns was only the strongest and truest in a populous chorus; and after him, as before him, the same tunes echo on, and Burns's way of dealing with them, itself an ancient one, becomes the commoner for his example. In this sense, and in hardly any other, can he be said to have founded a school. He did not give an impulse to Scottish song at all commensurate with his own power; but an impulse he did give to it, which only died down after a quarter of a century or more. It is hard for the critic to be at once a Scot and not a Scot; to enter into the joy of this northern poetry, and at the same time to escape mere national bias and over-estimate. And the poetry itself is not readily classified. Perhaps the broadest distinction is between that which is made to be sung and that which is made to be said, a distinction that strikes deep in the work of Burns, as in that of his companions. In either case, as often as not, the work is not pure invention, but is cast in some inherited form, and founded either on some floating ancient verse, or on a popular air, or on both. The whole body of production is so fragmentary and various and unequal, that it is simpler to select the names of a few authors, than to keep to any strict demarcation by kinds In 1789 Burns wrote:

My success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice, under the title of Scottish poets, that the very term Scots poetry borders on the burlesque.

Any other method would mean tracing the history of many separate themes and refrains through their curious fortunes. Such a ditty, for instance, as the admirable *Cauld Kail in Aberdeen*[1] has a long record. In its first form it dates back to 1728; this was preserved by Herd in his *Antient and Modern Scotish Songs* (ed. 1791) in two shapes, one of them purely bacchanalian, the other roguishly remonstrative:

> Wow, Aberdeen, what did you mean
> Sae young a maid to woo, sir?
> I 'm sure it was nae mows [jest] to her,
> Whate'er it was to you, sir!

This rough production was taken up by William Reid, and also by Alexander, Duke of Gordon; the latter put it into a rollickingly convivial form that delighted Burns and appeared in Johnson's *Musical Museum*. But that sweet singer of the *Land o' the Leal*, Lady Nairne, disapproved of it, and, according to her programme of refining popular songs in the cause of virtue, she retained the overture,

> There 's cauld kail in Aberdeen,
> There 's castocks [cabbage-haulms] in Strabogie,

but turned the song into a tale of a husband who 'pray'd wi' micht,' and that successfully, 'to keep him frae the cogie,' or drinking-pot; a deft enough version, and doubtless effective for its end. This is a typical procedure, and another is seen in the use made by Tennant of the old ballad (claimed for a seventeenth-century Semple of Beltrees) of *Maggie Lauder*, for his capital long piece, presently to be named, *Anster Fair*. The general debt of Burns to Fergusson and older writers has been named; but he drew on contemporaries too, and the *Logan Braes* and *Halloween* of John Mayne, the printer of Dumfries, were of some slight use to him. Mayne also used the old six-line measure, which Burns made his own, before Burns wrote; and his poem, *The Siller Gun*,[2] which briskly and vividly celebrates the shooting for the prize instituted at Dumfries by James VI., was expanded in five successive editions, overlapping at both ends the period of Burns's production. So, too, John Hamilton's ditty, 'Up in the mornin' early,' is put to a very old tune which Burns also utilised; and this eulogy of late rising, with its sharply-cut picture of the

linnets starving in the bushes, is uttered as freshly as anything by Burns himself. In other cases, where there is no actual original for words or air, the temper or theme is of traditional type, and the examples are often found in authors who left one or two masterpieces out of scores of experiments. To make a list would be only to review the countless minor poets who figure in the anthologies. But the wells of rough or reckless humour and of impassioned pathos in the Scottish soul are not easily exhausted. Lady Anne Lindsay, afterwards Lady Barnard, wrote her famous *Auld Robin Gray* in 1770, at the age of twenty ; she kept her authorship a secret for over half a century, and at last disclosed it to Scott. It is perfect ; her little sister had suggested the incident of the stealing of the cow—the last and worst misfortune of the heroine ; and for this we must forgive the sequel, which LadyAnne afterwards perpetrated, and in which Auld Robin Gray confesses on his deathbed that he, for ill motives, had been the stealer of the cow, and bequeaths his wife to her old lover. Many other songs were made with this didactic drift ; and in one, Hector MacNeill's *Scotland's Scaith, or Will and Jean*, we have a really brilliant and convincing poetical tract, of the Hogarthian kind, against the evils of whisky. Without these curious revulsions and repentances of the complex Scottish muse, suddenly remembering her Puritan upbringing, our picture of her is incomplete.

Nor do they by any means paralyse her art. The verses of Carolina Oliphant, afterwards Lady Nairne,[1] are often written with a purpose, and that without loss of life or sweetness. Her purpose was avowedly to temper and reform indecorous or unedifying old strains. This unpromising aim is often aptly carried through, as in the verses entitled *Eppie Macnab*, of which the old form contained, as Burns puts it, 'more wit than decency,' but whose gay and rapid rhythm does not disappear in Lady Nairne's hands. Her best pieces, however, such as *Caller Herrin'* and *The Land o' the Leal*, are free from any such experiment or its dangers. There is a heartfelt lilt about them which carried them home at once to the people, and the tune of the former, 'representing the chime of the bells of the Tron Church,' has always rung in their ears. *The Laird o' Cockpen*, in its full form, ends with two daring and delightful verses, out of key with the rest, added by Miss Ferrier. Lady Nairne's Jacobite songs like *The Hundred Pipers*, 'Will ye no come back again ? ' and *Charlie is my Darling*, have established themselves as classics of their kind, and must be among the last good things written in the true loyal vein. In this writer,

as in Hogg and Scott, Jacobitism has become a tender and passionate cult for a past cause rather than an active warfare, and permits of an equally loyal acceptance of the house of Hanover. In one piece, *Ye 'll mount, Gudeman*, there is a trace of the old savagely humorous scorn of the conquered for the conqueror ; the gudewife purposely scalds, under pretence of bathing, the foot of the Jacobite gudeman, and prevents him, just in time, from sallying forth to Culloden. Lady Nairne has a surer note and a more various power than most of the contemporaries of Scott or Burns. But John Skinner [1] with his *Tullochgorum*, and Muirhead, with his racy little idyll of flyting, *Bess the Gawkie*, and Sir Alexander Boswell,[2] with his *Jenny's Bawbee* and *Jenny dang the Weaver* may be mentioned, the rest[3] cannot be numbered. Perhaps the cradle song, ' Baloo, baloo,' of Richard Gall, the friend of Campbell, should be named for its lovely cadence. It must serve to single out three more names, those of Hector MacNeill,[4] Tannahill, and Allan Cunningham, from the throng, leaving James Hogg to a later page (Ch. x.).

Scotland's Scaith (1795) has been named already, and it may be regarded as a companion picture, or rather antidote and contrast, to the earlier and also popular verses of Alexander Wilson, the ' American ornithologist,' entitled *Watty and Meg* (1792)—a tale of a husband whose boon companions teach him how to tame a scolding, intolerable wife. She breaks in upon their carouse with a storm of abuse ; Watty goes home, takes their counsel, and ' reforms ' his Maggie by the mere threat of desertion, making the condition that she shall never ' gloom ' again when he comes home late in the evening. ' One hundred thousand copies,' it is said, of this ditty were sold in a few weeks ; it is in good vernacular, with little hint of rhetorical English. Hector MacNeill's counter-poem is a curious rude mixture of such English with a kind of prosaic Crabbe-like realism :

> Brattling down the brae, and near its
> Bottom, Will first marv'lling sees
> ' Porter, Ale, and British Spirits '
> Painted bright between twa trees.
>
> ' Godsake ! Tam ! here 's walth for drinking !
> Wha can this newcomer be ?
> ' Hout ! ' quo' Tam, ' there 's drouth in thinking ;
> Let 's in, Will, and syne we 'll see.'

In the sequel, *The Waes o' War*, the wrecked husband serves as a soldier, loses a leg, but returns to find his family saved

from the worst by the charity of the Duchess of Buccleuch. Of the first piece it is written that fourteen editions sold within one year. This alert appetite of a poor nation not only for writing but for buying tolerable poetry is unheard of in the south, where ballad and folk-song were as yet either slow to reach the press, or reached it in a vulgarised shape. The spirit of song was omnipresent in Scotland, like the Bible; and many of the chief favourites were also the best poetry. This is well seen in the case of MacNeill himself, some of whose rarer things, and not merely his more moral and conventional pieces, were and remained popular. The sentiment of *The Wee Thing, or Mary of Castlecary*, like its lingering anapæstic tune, sounds more Irish than Scottish; Mary, disguised as a man, relates how she had met and kissed—herself

Down by the burnie whar flowers the haw-tree;

and when her lover, indignant, wishes to fight her, she throws off bonnet and plaid, and all is well. In other verses, 'Come under my plaidie,' 'Tak tent and be wary,' 'I lo'ed ne'er a laddie but ane,' there is a stealing, happy, voluptuous rhythm, and an immediate sense that the lines are made to be *sung*, which at once carried them far on the lips of the people. MacNeill aims at verbal sweetness, and quotes with approval a critic who compared the Scots to Ionic Greek; 'it delights to throw out the consonants, to produce a concourse of vowels, to soften the sound.' He thrice sifted and published his poems—in 1801, 1806, and 1812.

Allan Cunningham (1784-1842) differs from the rest of this company, not only in date, but in being a capable man of all work as well as a poet. He wrote vivid and competent prose as well as verse, and in verse he used English and Scots with equal familiarity. His English is often conventional, but in a few poems, of which the best known is *A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea*, he commands a style and rhythm that rise far above Dibdin's to a level with almost the best of Campbell's. In the fragment, 'Gane were but the winter cauld,' there is a deliberate simplicity which approaches artifice, but also an extraordinary irregular charm:

Let nane tell my father,
Or my mither sae dear;
I 'll meet them baith in heaven
At the spring o' the year.

In his *Hame, Hame, Hame*, in spite of the flecks of declamatory phrase, the lines chant themselves irresistibly; and here also

a cunning run of extra-metrical syllables, or else of monosyllabic feet, coming at the beginning of the line or midway at the break, nobly justifies itself:

> The green leaf o' loyalty 's begun for to fa',
> The bonny white rose it is withering and a';
> But I 'll water 't wi' the blude of usurping tyrannie,
> An' green it will grow in my ain countrie.
> Hame, hame, hame, hame fain wad I be,
> O hame, hame, hame to my ain countrie!

Cunningham may be said to have commenced as poet with his *pastiches* in the *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song* (1810), which he avowed later that he had palmed off on the editor, Cromek, the rascally engraver, as popular originals. They contain such ballads as *The Young Maxwell*, a spirited mimicry of the folk-style; sorrowful and cheerful songs ('A weary body 's blythe whan the sun gangs down'); lively humorous pieces, and Jacobite and other poems, of which the two quoted above are examples. Cunningham supplied in this form most of what Cromek published in the *Remains*. It is impossible to say exactly what he really collected [1] from the folk, or how he treated it. Later, when he produced some of them under his own name, he anglicised and otherwise changed a good deal; the result can be seen in *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell* (1822), a new dramatic piece, to which 'Twenty Scottish Songs' are added. Some of them meanwhile had found their way into James Hogg's *Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (1822), and Hogg is there disinclined to credit Cunningham with the authorship, which had meantime been asserted or suggested. A touch of delicate, not unpoetic affectation and imitation, distinguishes the best of Cunningham's work from that of his contemporaries. His editions of *Songs of Scotland* [2] (1825) and of Burns, whilst useful, would have been more so had he not played with the texts. He worked for most of his later life as manager of the works in Chantrey's studio—his original trade was that of mason—and in his leisure produced plays, novels, and biographies. Of these little is remembered but his *Lives of Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1829-33), which contain his most vigorous and useful prose; and, perhaps, his *Life of Wilkie*.

Few lyrical poets of the north were more popular, in the generation after Burns, than Robert Tannahill [3] (1774-1810), the weaver of Paisley, another of the singers who by preference wrote to music. He was himself versed in fife and pipe, and was alive to the charm of gentle words and undulating

syllables, with a quick feeling, above all, for the plaintiveness of names. The titles of some of his best-loved pieces, *Jessie the Flower o' Dunblane*, *The Lass o' Arranteenie*, *The Braes o' Gleniffer*, *Loudoun's Bonnie Woods and Braes*, attest, like the verses themselves, this kind of sensibility, without which no man can be more than half a poet. Tannahill wove not only Paisley silk to his patterns, but his own words to Highland and other tunes, working in Scots, and less successfully (as might be feared) in English. His English is often ordinary, experimental, and too full of personifications; it is best when it is gently tinted with Scots. He wished his verse to be sung; and the story is that he found it 'the most delightful moment of his life' when he overheard a country girl chanting one of his own lines:

> We'll meet beside the dusky glen, on some burn-side.

In his best poem, made to an old air, *The Braes o' Balquhither*, Tannahill has won a true prosodic charm and joy:

> Let us go, lassie, go
> To the braes o' Balquhither,
> Where the blaeberries grow
> 'Mang the bonnie Highland heather;
> Where the deer and the rae
> Lightly bounding together
> Sport the lang summer day
> On the braes o' Balquhither.

His other vernacular works have a gaiety and tartness of their own, and are varied enough, sometimes following and sometimes escaping from the patterns set by Burns, whose example, we come to think, is as often oppressive as it is inspiring. Tannahill made beast-fables, epistles, ordinary drink-songs, and jaunty verse of sundry sorts. One such work, *The Kebbuckston Wedding*, 'written to an ancient Highland air,' has a kind of Ingoldsby fling in its motley rhythms and rhymes. At other seasons he follows something like the metre and manner of *The Twa Dogs*, but it is rather a kind of Scottish Hudibrastic, as he himself terms it; and in his *Epistle* 'to J. B*ch*n*n' he speaks aptly enough of his own habits of writing:

> But scrimpt o' time and lear scholastic
> My lines limp on in Hudibrastic . . .
> Till hope, grown sick, flings down her claim
> And drops her dreams of future fame.
> Yes, O waesuck! should I be vaunty?
> My Muse is just a Rozinante,

She stammers forth with hilching canter,
Sagely intent on strange adventure,
Yet sae uncouth in garb and feature,
She seems the fool of literature.

Tannahill was a 'too quick despairer,' and hard upon himself; it is a pity that he did not give rein to his spirits, and play 'the fool of literature' longer. He made an end of himself at the age of thirty-five, after having burned many of his works. His poems and songs had appeared in a volume in 1807, and also occasionally in George Thomson's collection of *Musical Melodies*.

As we stop and listen again to this whole forestful of Scottish singers, Burns included, in sweet, voluble, confusing chorus, and forget their separate and individual notes, we get above all a sense of something impersonal, communal, and inexhaustible. There is an astonishing range of tones, from the pure and piercing to the fat, gross, and uproarious, and from the pensive and gentle to the fierce and vindictive. And yet it is all one voice; the very falsetto, which plays its part in the tumult, is distinctively Scottish, for it arises commonly from the sudden juxtaposition of pseudo-poetic southern ornamental language with a purer style, and the resulting shock is unlike anything that can be caused by incongruities of style within the same language. But on the whole this element does not bulk large; there is more discord than falsetto—the discord of suddenly-alternating moods of anger and tenderness, ribaldry and pathos, which are not harmonised by the Scottish muse any more than in the Scottish nature; but the result is all the more typical and expressive. The mixture of fun, satire, and the dreadful in Burns's *Address to the Deil* is not a harmony; it is a discord, and all the better and righter for that. There is none of that English passion for consistency, for a slowly unified intellectual point of view, which we find in so many of our poets; in Wordsworth, for example, and more unexpectedly in Keats and Shelley. The northern poet has no consistency: he is a pipe on which many airs are sounded; he is, despite all the prudence, self-control, and other virtues imputed to his race, a creature of mood and the hour, and therefore the better singer. Hence we are not to look for long concerted compositions, like the Odes of the Lake poets, or the *Hellenics* of Landor. *The Jolly Beggars* is perhaps the nearest thing we can find to a carefully composed long work of art in the vernacular, but its components are themselves of a kind that proves the rule.

The Italian medley (see Ch. XVII.) did not flourish only in the south of England. Once at least it was grafted on a Scottish stock and bore pleasant fruit. Some years before the publication of Frere's *Whistlecraft*, William Tennant, the lame and learned schoolmaster of Anstruther Easter in Fife, produced his *Anster Fair* (1812), in six cantos, celebrating the magic courtship, by Rob the Ranter, of Maggie Lauder,[1] the heroine of the old native popular ditty. This little elfish tale is excellently shaped and told. The scene is laid in the time of James V., who presides over the festivities; Puck and his dame have been imprisoned severally in a mustard-pot and a pepper-box by Michael Scot the wizard, against the time when the fairest of Scottish maids shall wed the supplest of Scottish men. Inspired by these 'ouphes,' Maggie appoints a day of sports, the winner whereof is to gain her hand, whilst Rob arms himself with enchantments and carries off the prize in a donkey race, a sack race, and lastly, in tale-telling—that is all. The personages and humours of Fife, with a sprinkling of the dialect, are served up with lively skill and mock-heroic expansiveness. Tennant gives the taste of peasant talk, and a picture of the peasant mind, broadly enough; the thick odours of the soil are not smothered by too much literature. The poetic turn, which Burns gives to his rankest and most ribald snatches, is attained by Tennant sometimes; and at other times there is a true interfusion of homely and vivid things with a rarer spirit:

> So on she rode in virgin majesty,
> Charming the thin dead air to kiss her lips,
> And with the light and grandeur of her eye
> Shaming the proud sun into dim eclipse;
> While, round her presence clust'ring far and nigh,
> On horseback some, with silver spurs and whips,
> And some afoot with shoes of dazzling buckles,
> Attended knights, and lairds, and clowns with horny knuckles.

As will be seen, 'the stanza of Fairfax'—namely the octave—'is here shut with the alexandrine of Spenser, that its close may be more full and sounding'; a variation that is happily enough carried through. Tennant became a professor of Eastern languages, producing *The Thane of Fife* (1822) and other pieces; but *Anster Fair*, often since reprinted, alone survives: there is a wild fling or dance in it as of villagers maddened by the fairies.

CHAPTER V

WILLIAM BLAKE

I. Seeming isolation of Blake; his scanty debt to contemporaries. First period, 1783-91, first lyrics and earliest unrhymed lays. Second period, 1792-6, mythic and prophetic lays, and *Songs of Experience*. Third period, 1797-1804 and later; darker prophetic lays, and *Everlasting Gospel*, etc. Felpham, 1801-3. Last period, to 1827, prose works, late lyrics; Blake chiefly now a designer.

II. Nature of Blake's 'vision'; its threefold effect, on his theories, on his imagery, and on his workmanship. *Poetical Sketches*; literary models, Elizabethan and other; signs of original style. *Songs of Innocence* and *Book of Thel*; conception of childhood; latent sense of strife; mood of these poems.

III. Mythic lays: prose *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and ideas there set forth; individualism of Blake, and its connection with his gospel; relation to the critical age. Fabric, personages, nomenclature of the lays. *Visions of the Daughters of Albion, America, Europe, Urizen, Ahania, Book of Los, Song of Los.*

IV. Some influences shaping these poems: Milton and *Paradise Lost*; the Bible; Macpherson's *Ossian*. Metres possibly traceable to Macpherson's prose: (1) the seven-beat line; its powers; (2) the three-beat line. Examples.

V. *Songs of Experience*, their relationship to *Songs of Innocence*. Other metaphysical lyrics; use of technical terms. *The Mental Traveller. Auguries of Innocence. The Everlasting Gospel*, its ethics.

VI. Later prophetic works: *The Four Zoas* (*Vala*); *Jerusalem*; *Milton*. General character; reference to chosen passages. Increasing dryness and darkness of symbolism. Lawless 'Gothic.'

VII. Prose: *Vision of the Last Judgment*; *Descriptive Catalogue*, and *Canterbury Pilgrimage*. Blake's lack of contemporary influence. Mention of him by Southey, Wordsworth, Landor, Coleridge, Lamb, Crabb Robinson. Solitary in his age, yet essentially connected with it. His position among poets.

I

William Blake[1] (1757-1827), that great reporter of visions, whose work and life remain to fortify the artist, seems at first sight to have sprung from nothing; to be a dreamer without a pedigree, a Melchisedec, an example of the self-originating energy of genius, and an alien to the thought and poetry around him. Reason is the Devil to William Blake; the world of appearances, which science has to analyse, he disowns; to doubt and dissect is to extinguish the sun and moon. Blake is the living negation of negations. The corresponding kinds

of art, distinctive of the eighteenth century, are to him no art at all, whether they be photographic and realistic like the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, or logical and abstract like the *Essay on Man*. Crabbe's motto, 'nudity of description, actuality of relation, and poetry without an atmosphere,' well expresses what Blake hates and avoids. He has not, like Cowper, to break away from the classical manner and attitude; it has no hold on him at any time after his boyhood; and even then he uses it but for a moment, to proclaim the dearth of poetry:

> The languid strings do scarcely move,
> The sound is forced, the notes are few.

The designs that Blake made to the verse of Blair and Young, to Ambrose Phillips or to Hayley, are merely occasioned, not inspired, by the texts. His poetical vices are not those of his day. He owes nothing, or nothing permanent, to the forerunners of the new poetry, to Thomson or Gray or Collins; a good deal, as will appear, to Macpherson; something to the hymnodists; but, to his own poetic contemporaries, nothing. He is far away from Burns, and has an outlook into the infinite that is foreign to Burns, whose excellence it is to represent real life with antique clearness, liveliness, and beauty.

Unnoticed, he was sooner in the field than Burns. In 1783 *Poetical Sketches* was privately printed. It was in ordinary type; but all the other poems that Blake issued, except *The French Revolution*, appeared in his own form of 'illuminated printing.' Thus none of his verse came fairly before the world in his lifetime; each copy of each poem was in the nature of a separate work of art. He made the words and designs, engraved them by an original process, and often coloured the copies, on the top of the tint in which they were printed, by hand; the issues were therefore very limited. The harmony and variety of Blake's gifts, together with the uncharted course of thought that he steered, and the unearthliness of the land that his mind came to inhabit, explain his want of immediate influence and the slow growth of his name.

At first his work was chiefly lyrical, and the symbolic ingredient little seen. From 1783 to 1791 he produced, besides *Poetical Sketches*, his *Songs of Innocence* (1789), and three mythic narratives in long unrhymed lines: namely *Tiriel*, which remained unpublished; *The Book of Thel* (1789); and *The French Revolution* (1791), of which one printed copy has at last been found. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790),

which is mostly in prose, contains some of Blake's fundamental doctrine. The years 1791-5 mark his maturity as a poetic artist. The lyric impulse still prevails, but is more and more enlisted in the service of symbol. *Songs of Experience* (1794) are not merely pendants or palinodes to *Songs of Innocence*; they introduce a new order of ideas, being hatched from the same nest as the mythic lays of the same period and often inscrutable without reference to them. *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *America, a Prophecy* (1793), *Europe, a Prophecy* (1794), *The First Book of Urizen* (1794), *The Book of Ahania* (1795), *The Song of Los* and *The Book of Los* (also 1795), are sometimes known collectively as the earlier 'prophetic' works. In conception and purport, though not altogether in metre and diction, they differ from *Thel* and *Tiriel*. They form a noble body of mythic verse, cast in a mould that had no precedent, and containing a set of incidents and personages more or less in common. Their poetical freshness, greatness and imperfection, are at once apparent. They are not easily thought of apart from their designs, and Blake's portentous gift as a draughtsman was mainly shown, up to 1797, in the illustration of his own texts. He was soon to begin his drawings, over five hundred in number, to Young's *Night Thoughts*. Forty-three came out in 1797, the first of the long series of inventions that culminate in those to the *Book of Job* (1826), and to Dante (*c.* 1826).

During seven years (1797-1804) Blake proceeded to elaborate his symbolic system, or no-system, into greater perplexity. *The Four Zoas*, originally entitled *Vala* and begun about 1794, was much worked over and altered, and in the end left in manuscript. It served in some measure as a quarry for the two long 'Prophecies' *Jerusalem* and *Milton* (from 1804). These were begun during the years 1801-3, when Blake stayed at Felpham[1] under the auspices of William Hayley—the most exalted, illuminated, and fruitful period, as he judged, of his inner and visionary life. The songs that occur in his letters to his friend Butts are the most wonderful of poetic diaries. After 1804 he laboured at these 'Prophetic' works, and also, after 1810, at that great fighting lyric *The Everlasting Gospel*. In the course of these last twenty-three years, Blake also wrote some brief but signally noble and eloquent compositions in prose. Only one, the *Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures*, including the criticism on the Canterbury Pilgrims, was published (1804). *The Catalogue* 'for the year 1810' and the so-called *Public Address* did not appear in his lifetime. He gave him-

self more and more to design, and in his own day was best known and esteemed as an illustrator. Like Michelangelo and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, he can only be fully judged by minds that are equally awake to fine art and to literature. He is here considered as a man of letters. But it may be said that there is no disaccord either between his designs and his writings, or between his character and his art. He had the happiness of unreserved and sincere, though not always of lucid, self-expression. In his letters, his recorded talk, his printed prose, his verse, his drawings and paintings, everything is mirrored: his indignant and tender habit of soul, sometimes childlike, sometimes grotesque, but essentially noble; his intuitive, prophetic way of thought, with its inconsequence, its hit-or-miss quality, its frequent and triumphant insight; his natural dualism, which led him to array all the forces, persons, and ideas in the world in one or other of two opposing camps; and his regardless self-sufficing courage, bodily, intellectual, and moral. The truth of the old Greek psychology, which views pity and terror as feelings near akin, and the artist as playing upon them both together, is well justified in Blake, in whose work, as with a kind of natural rhythm, alternate the 'terrific numbers' and the 'mild and gentle numbers.'

II

Blake's idiosyncrasy, his faculty of 'vision,' lies behind all his creations; it affected his ideas and opinions and bears on the incidental question of his sanity. Nothing is better known about him than that he saw, when a child, angels walking among the haymakers, and afterwards, in the fields at Felpham, grey shadows, luminous and majestic; that the kings of England sat to him for their pictures, and that two of the major prophets once dined with him. But he distinguished these sights, and the accompanying voices, from those of what we call the external world, declaring at the same time that this latter was mirage, and the visions the reality. Further descriptions must be left to the professional psychologists; but so long as the distinction is maintained between the two worlds—that of ordinary phenomena, and that of the visions which are externalised, or locally referred to the same world, but are not confounded with its contents—so long there can hardly be said, in strictness, to be any delusion. Blake could have bargained with the haymakers, and painted the angels, without any bewilderment. His

reading of Swedenborg[1] may have quickened this faculty and coloured its deliverances; but he did not cultivate trances, nor again did he try to shape and control his visions; he let them come and go, and recorded them in words or lines as might best serve. The paradox did not trouble him, that only the despised message of the senses could, in the last resort, furnish him with the shapes, colours, and sounds connected with his apparitions; and about this paradox we too may be at peace, being concerned only with the poetic results. The whole world of nature, its creatures and phenomena, come before his inner eye in a kind of glory, with new gestures, new robes and colours, and thus clothed in the interest of a moral or spiritual, or a polemical meaning; and soon it is also tenanted by endless elemental figures, embodiments of this meaning and couriers of his thought, in human shapes that have become angelic or monstrous; all *seen*[2]; and these, again, dwell in countries, each with its own provinces, into which space is mapped and quartered, and which are likewise seen.

The effects of this master-faculty on Blake's art and thinking are manifold. It shapes his view of the imagination, which he holds to be (together with feeling) the sole source of vital truth; and hence arises his whole theory of art, which inspires his greatest prose, and is the earliest and most shattering blast sounded against the canons of the time. Further, his vision is anthropomorphic, and the *dramatis personæ* in his poems have the character of imaginary portraits, as in the pictures accompanying:

> Think of a white cloud[3] as being holy, you cannot love it; but think of a holy man within the cloud, love springs in your thought; for to think of holiness as distinct from man is impossible to the affections: thought alone can make monsters, but the affections cannot.

Thirdly, it is vision that gives to Blake's imagery that 'sharp and wiry bounding line,' which he tells us is 'the great golden rule of art as well as of life,' and which is really its characteristic, coupled with the phantasmal remoteness that is never far off even in his familiar style. He makes us see designs to his words, even when he does not draw them:

> Joys upon our branches sit,
> Chirping loud and singing sweet.

These lines from a youthful poem tell us that the whole shadow-show of personifications, so bitterly to be criticised by Wordsworth, is doomed to death, if indeed it has ever lived. We watch the 'joys' in their actual shapes, infantine

or birdlike. But lastly, Blake's power of evocation did him harm, because he often respected his visions too much either to correct their drawing or their utterances. Moses would not have edited the Commandments; Blake would not reconsider any ugly drivel about 'Kox' or 'Kotope,' thinking it was dictated by voices divine. A tale told by a living critic [1] goes to the root of this matter:

> I was once showing Rodin some facsimiles of Blake's drawings, and, telling him about Blake, I said: 'He used to literally see these figures; they are not mere inventions.' 'Yes,' said Rodin, 'he saw them once; he should have seen them three or four times.' There, it seems to me, is the fundamental truth about the art of Blake; it is a record of vision which has not been thoroughly mastered even as vision.

The same is true of his writing, at least in its later stages: it is full of vision that is not fully mastered even as vision, and of a message that is not fully mastered even as a message. In the lyrics and the earlier mythic works, both the vision and the message are much more distinct and beautiful. Indeed, the presence or absence of vision helps us to distinguish the early experiments where he models, however admirably, upon his reading, from those in which he speaks for himself. 'My silks and fine array,' in *Poetical Sketches*, is a Jacobean song, so perfectly done as to suggest the transmigration into Blake of some old writer's soul. But it has not his phantom touch; the 'axe and spade' are not seen, but remembered from Shakespeare, as Beddoes or Lamb might have remembered them. 'Love's all-worship'd tomb' is not seen, but musically thought of. It is otherwise in the *Mad Song*:

> Like a fiend in a cloud
> With howling woe
> After night I do crowd,
> And with night will go.

It is an accident that this is a verse and not a drawing. Amidst much in *Poetical Sketches* that is boyish studio-work, we often come on such true recoveries of a long-dead style, as recall the piercing lyrics of the old dramatists. Wonderful as these echoes are for the year 1783, or for any date, Blake did not farther pursue the manner of seventeenth-century song; nor that of Spenser; nor that of Shakespeare's early plays, which he caught, in *King Edward the Third*, with much spirit and gusto, and only occasionally recalled, much later, in his *Jerusalem*; nor, again, that of the ballad, a kind of verse

to which he pays his tribute in *Gwin, King of Norway*. Twice afterwards, it is true, in that 'glorified street-ballad' *William Bond*, and in the ditty in *Jerusalem*, 'I was a monk of Charlemaine,' the same sound is heard. The slow sonority of the school of Gray is present in the famed lines of lingering regret for the decrepitude of English poetry. On the other hand, Blake's personal and mature style is often anticipated in *Poetical Sketches*:

> I turn my back to the east,
> From whence comforts have increased;
> For light doth seize my brain
> With frantic pain.

That is the note of *Songs of Experience*. And the crude and botched beginnings of his 'prophetic' diction, and even of its distinguishing metre, are evident in prose tirades like *Samson* and *The Couch of Death*, while there are lines that might come from *America* or the *Four Zoas*:

> O yet may Albion smile again and stretch her peaceful arms.

So, too, 'I love the jocund dance' is a 'song of innocence'; and that sharp dualism of contrasting tones and moods on which Blake's art was always to revolve, presenting in alternation the beauty of joy and tenderness, and of wrath or sorrow —the happy, and the 'furious face of things,' in Sir Thomas Browne's phrase—is seen, even thus early, to be inherent.

Childhood, in our eighteenth-century literature, had been treated conventionally, or given over to the pedagogues. *Songs of Innocence* celebrate it as a state, or type, of unfallen mortality, with only passing shadows cast upon its sports and pleasures; and yet so strict is the insistence on gentle and happy themes, that we feel the harsher voice of adult knowledge or doubt to be in Blake's ears all the while; and this is uttered in *The Voice of the Ancient Bard*,[1] which may be placed in either series of *Songs*. It also speaks suddenly at the end of the contemporary *Book of Thel*, where it calls to Thel from 'her own grave-plot,' and inquires, without giving any answer, into the significance of man's mature senses, with all their snares and discords. Into this place underground Thel has wandered from a land of innocence, in which she wailed her own weariness; and where, questioning lily and clod as to the mystery of their common caducity, she has learned a gospel peaceful and Christian enough, but inadequate to solve the discords of life;—the gospel, indeed, of the *Songs of Inno-*

cence themselves. It is plain that Blake is not setting himself, in works like *A Cradle Song* and *The Lamb*, to versify a world of false pretty pastoral that breaks at the touch of life; for, in his conception, innocence is the final and not only the primitive estate of man, although the soul lapses meanwhile and the great wars of experience intervene. It is the dream of Isaiah who saw 'Mercy, Pity, and Peace' enthroned and was thought to have foreseen the reign of Christ; and it is renewed by the idealist and revolutionary movement of Blake's time, though he translates it into art and not into programmes:

> For Mercy has a human heart,
> Pity a human face,
> And Love, the human form divine,
> And Peace, the human dress.

These ethics always remain essential in Blake's creed of the regeneration of man, though he comes to think of this event rather in its intellectual aspect, as 'an overwhelming of bad art and science.' In such an infantine state of trust there are no problems; the animals are chosen for their possession of the Christian virtues; the lion's ruddy eyes 'flow with tears of gold,' and the tiger is not yet made. To the little boy lost God appears, 'like his father, in white.' It is poetry rooted in the simplest pious sentiment, and seems to be not a little influenced by traditional hymnody:

> He doth give his joy to all;
> He becomes an infant small;
> He becomes a man of woe;
> He doth feel the sorrow too.

As critics have remarked, the tune here and elsewhere may be distantly suggested by Watts's *Divine Songs for the Use of Children* (1720). The hymns, however, of Watts and Wesley often have no style at all, but only an excellent rhythm and sentiment, which are enough for the worshipper; while *Songs of Innocence* have an irregular, inexplicable, and simple rightness of style. The touches of rarer colour and transfiguring diction answer to the bolder flourishes that break out amidst the soft spray-work of the margins. *Holy Thursday*, with its echo of Sternhold and Hopkins, is a masterpiece in the familiar-splendid. The *Chimney-Sweeper*, in its glory of doggerel, is like a broadsheet gone to heaven. And often a single phrase, like 'happy, silent, moony beams,' or a couplet,

> Once a dream did weave a shade
> O'er my angel-guarded bed,

actually recovers for us those dumb sensations of imaginative childhood, that Wordsworth describes in his great *Ode*.

Go down some poor but not stricken ghetto on a morning of unexpected sunshine, that glorifies the dirt and the sweepers and sets the children dancing to the hurdy-gurdies. A woman swings an infant in her arms and talks to it; old men sun themselves at entries, and the sparrows almost perch upon them. They might be in the meadows, or under the 'old oak.' The eye ignores the squalor, and only fixes on the ideal gestures, the sweep of a young bare arm or the curve of a mob issuing from the school-gates. Why should not the world be good after all? If we were only Blake, we could 'trap the moment,' and engrave another song of innocence. It was all true while it lasted, and it may even come back. Such a place at night, in its more obvious aspects, might inspire the second *Holy Thursday*, or the sombre *London*—those *Songs of Experience*, which reflect an adult, or rather adolescent, dismay at social wrongs and evils. But this later series is divided from the first by five fruitful years, and must be studied along with the other works, larger in scope and much more disconcerting in form, that Blake had meanwhile begun.

III

Some of the ideas that shape the fabric and the action of these parabolic lays—*The Daughters of Albion* and its successors—can be seen in prose form in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. This book is only a starting-point; its ideas are further developed, through the play of symbol, in the poems themselves; but it is Blake's clearest confession of faith before 1800, and the place it holds in his work is not unlike that of *Thus spake Zarathustra* in Nietzsche's. Nothing more is here attempted than barely to name some of his tenets. A patient and scientific marshalling of the texts will probably reveal that his peculiar terminology, in the case both of abstract terms and of proper names, has more consistency and meaning than has yet been established; but also, that the artistic worth of the poems in question, already seen to be great, will not appear much greater. However that may be, they are unique in their method of presenting ideas; it is not Wordsworth's method, or Shelley's, or Spenser's; though in some ways, regarded as polemical epics or semi-dramas, they are nearest to Shelley; and in his ultimate hope and expectation for mankind Blake obviously approaches Shelley. But

some of his fundamental ideas and all his poetic machinery are different.

He holds, then, that truth is given in vision, neither by the mere report of the five senses, nor yet by logical reasoning. As for the senses, they have a qualified kind of veracity:

> Man has no Body distinct from his Soul, for that called Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five senses, the chief inlets of soul in this age. . . . If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.

This last sentence was uttered to Blake by the prophet Ezekiel. Here sense is contrasted, as inferior, with soul or spirit, but it is still a better avenue to truth than any process of inference. Science and consecutive argument are foreign to Blake, and he raises his hatred of them into a dogma. He vindicates the claims of intuition against the whole temper and method of the rationalistic age. Art, therefore, is not that mere copying of outward phenomena, which is only for the stage of apprenticeship.[1] It copies images that are given to the inner eye, though they may be seen as external. They are more vivid and real than the messages of sense. Blake, in 1800, thinks of them as reminiscences from an eternal region:

> In my brain are studies and chambers full of books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life, and those works are the delight and study of archangels.

But in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake is mostly concerned with applying his artistic creed to ethics and society. Here he is a child of the age of reason, with its revolutionary hopes and dreams. But he does not reason, for he has only two forms of words in which to present truth. One of these is aphorism, the other is symbol. Both forms are used in this work, so explosively charged with the energy that it celebrates. The gospel that emerges is that of power, of affirmation, and of happiness due to satisfied desire. The historic creeds, or 'bibles,' we hear, taught that energy, as coming from the body, is the essential evil; the contrary is true. Blake's individualism, whilst inborn, was probably encouraged to take this dogmatic shape by his association with Paine, the Wollstonecrafts and their circle, from whom he learned some of the immigrant revolutionary doctrines. The aphoristic form he may have derived from the pretentious maxims of Lavater, but it suggests rather the *Book of Proverbs*. On

the ethical side, his verse and prose are filled with bold vindications of natural pleasure. Burns, whilst nearer to common humanity at many points, is subject to rueful, white-sheet, next-morning fits of penitence, the result of a want of real love or passion and of his maltreatment of natural instincts. Blake treats these instincts loftily, and never fails in passion. Such a gospel of delight and power might seem to suit ill with his other strain of gentleness and pity, which he draws straight from the New Testament. But both moods are part of his belief in the inborn goodness of man and woman, when let alone by laws, priests, and authorities. Humanity, in its unfallen, ideal and ultimate condition, does not know this contradiction ; nor indeed is there any between joy or energy and pity or tenderness.

Blake derided Rousseau, in the same breath as Voltaire, as a mocker, and cannot have comprehended him ; but Rousseau's 'state of nature' had become a current idea, and probably reinforces the memories of the Hebrew Paradise in Blake's picture of the early innocence of mankind. And the general notion of the 'enlightenment,' a notion in which Rousseau and the negative critical spirits concur, though they approach it, on different sides, namely, that man's state of bondage, weakness and misery is due to the vast oppressive institutions, which in a state of delusion he has built up for himself ;—this notion is taken over by Blake wholesale, and supplies a second source for his symbolic imagery. His antitheology rests upon it, as well as his antinomianism. Only here, by a sudden turn, his psychology intervenes, and the enemy, the tyrant Urizen, is represented as Reason, whom we might have expected to find in the guise of a liberator.

Blake reviles the five senses and also the logical reason. This mixture is not so inconsistent as it seems, for the destructive reason had really, in certain schools, led to a crude sort of sensualism and materialism, and Blake, in his own way, proclaims the revolt against such conclusions. His dislike of 'science' may be childish, and his dislike of the world of sense-imagery on which he really drew, ungrateful, but he is not childish at all in the alternatives, the preferences, that these dislikes involve. And what, then, are they ? What is left,[1] if sense and reason are disallowed ? With Blake, the imagination and the heart are left ; vision and love ; the sights and voices of the inner sense (which he calls imagination) ; and, on the other side, the reconciliation of man with his fellows, through mercy and

pity, and therewith his recovery of his place in eternity. Only in the light of this view can be understood his strident proclamation of personal freedom, of the wickedness of restrictive law, and of the uncurbed rights of desire. Where all is love, no law is wanted. But Blake converted this truth into the fallacy that the absence of law must lead to the reign of love. No one need trouble to argue against him ; indeed it is almost absurd to play the schoolman at all with Blake, with his assertive, Hebraic, intuitive soul. He stands to be judged by the artistic perfection that he has given to his best and richest ideas ; and this test he stands a hundred times over. The second of his letters to Butts,

> And the voice faded mild ;
> I remain'd as a child ;
> All I ever had known
> Before me bright shone ;

and *A Cradle Song*, and the passage on the nightingale in the second book of Milton, and the chant of Nature at the end of *The Four Zoas*, reveal his dream :

> The lions . . . in evening sport upon the plains ;
> They raise their faces from the earth, conversing with the man ; . . .
> ' How is it that all things are changed, even as in ancient time ? '
> The sun arises from his dewy bed, and the fresh airs
> Play in his smiling beams, giving the seeds of life to grow,
> And the fresh earth beams forth ten thousand thousand springs of life :

This vision of the new earth, where all things living are at peace, is Blake's religion. After all, two things, perhaps the only two things, that are certain are beauty, and goodness or love. However each of them arose, and however they be analysed, and in whatever instances (unrecognised by Blake) their calls may conflict, and in spite of the doubts and problems that arise within the sphere of each of them, there they are ; and in nine cases out of ten they involve no problems and speak for themselves. This is enough to work upon. The artist gives expression to both ; primarily to beauty, and also to goodness so far as it can be presented under the law of beauty. The great religious founder gives expression to both, primarily to goodness, but also to beauty, since he too becomes a kind of artist in his expression of the law of goodness or love. Operate on Blake ; cut away from him all his paradox, all his confusions, all that is cracked and distorted in his thinking, all that is mad or disorganised in his execution, and there still remain his perfect presentations of love and beauty. This is why he is a great man, and why we return to him.

But he is a poet not only of these large simple things, that are self-evident once they are said or painted, but of the disharmonies of man's present life and nature. Good explains itself, but evil does not explain itself. This may be why Christ spoke, in comparison, so little of evil, and left that business to divines. Blake has an amazing intuition of evil and disharmony; he has an endless flood of imagery, also of rhetoric, when talking of it; some of his personifications and pictures of it—Urizen, *A Poison Tree*, the lines in *Auguries of Innocence*:

> The harlot's cry from street to street
> Shall weave old England's winding-sheet.
> The winner's shout, the loser's curse,
> Dance before dead England's hearse:

—these, in their different styles, are beyond praise. But in such a region Blake, both as thinker and artist, is much harder to follow, and is less to be trusted, than when he is celebrating love and beauty. His antipathies are far more confused, and his form correspondingly more complex, obscure, and fallible. In habit of mind he is Manichæan; for the kind of instinctive dualism, which ranges all men and things under the banner of two conflicting principles, one good and one evil, is a matter of temperament; theories and systems are made afterwards to satisfy the instinct. Blake is under the necessity of this kind of dualism. It is natural to every fighter, but is intensified in his case by the cast of his imagination, which delighted in marshalling two great elemental hosts at war in eternity, dividing them into endless regiments, and making these elements symbolic of everything he loved and hated in human history. The misfortune is that the world is really divided not into two camps, but into two thousand. But of history Blake knew nothing; on his negative side, he springs from the movement that made a clean sweep of its instruction. His combat answers to no real series of events in the growth of the human spirit, which has undergone a gradual evolution, in spite of the immense arrests, recessions and lapses, that to judge by all precedent are sure to recur. There may again be a long night with a few stars: 'dark ages,' illuminated by some exceptional souls. Thus Blake's drama, though noble and poetic, is purely an ideal one.

Many have tried, with some success, to clear the jungle of technical terms in which Blake embodies his cosmogony, his moral code, his picture of mankind, and his eschatology. But the lexicon of his symbolism is still to seek. His dialect has

to be classified and analysed, in order to show how far his use of each term is fixed and consistent—and in this path some progress is likely—and how far it varies, bifurcates, or trespasses on his usage of other terms. No effort is made here to sum up what is already known or surmised, much less to explore further. Such a task would involve a long chapter, or a book. One class of such words is taken from common speech, though the meaning is altered and even reversed. 'Spectre,' 'emanation,' 'vegetable,' 'sex,' 'state,' 'angel,' 'devil,' 'the Eternals,' are but a few examples. Another class is personal; the names presently to be mentioned from the Prophetic books are but a handful of the whole. These, as to origin, may be Ossianic, or Biblical, or purely fantastic (like De Quincey's Gombroon or the inventions of the little boy Malkin [1]); or historic, like 'Jerusalem' and 'Milton' and 'Albion,' used in a non-natural sense; or real persons turned phantasmagoric, like the grotesque 'Kox' and 'Schofeld.' The poetic effect is often disastrous; but one remark may be made, to show that Blake had some traits of the divines whom he despised.

We are reminded at once of the part that 'wit' and 'will' play in the verse of Donne and his followers, or 'grace' and 'justify' in evangelical hymns. Now, if such words are not to lower the pulse of the poetry, it must be because they are blows as well as words. They come charged with violent and deep historical passions; they reverberate. Their broad sense is familiar; the emotions they have kindled are still more so. But Blake had to create his own associations; he had to force his terms, above all, into lyrical utterance, making us forget any natural sense they may possess, and bringing us to share his own passion. The daring with which he faces this obstacle is sometimes triumphant, but the hope is on the whole forlorn. It is here that he falls away from art, though it is also here that it is capable of wonders. In one of his 'intellectual battles,' the 'spectre,' or discursive reason of man and his 'emanation,' or faculty of spiritual enlightenment, are evilly sundered. The spectre refuses all appeals for mercy, and this abstruse topic rises to a fiery hymn:

> Never, never I return;
> Still for victory I burn.
> Living, thee alone I 'll have,
> And when dead I 'll be thy grave.

Those who have lived at all with what are called religious people will remember how often they make a kind of mosaic

of devout terminology and familiar speech, using the names of the divinities, or the keywords of their special creed, as a kind of amulet or token, just as another kind of devotee might finger his beads half-consciously. They may refer to Lord Beaconsfield or Bismarck, without ado, as 'Antichrist.' This is just like Blake. He gives nicknames to Time, Space, Jehovah, Reason or Passion, and forgets to explain. In most of his letters this dialect is used quite naturally. 'Vegetated' and 'eternity,' in the following, are words with special connotations, which have to be learned :

> I look back into the regions of reminiscence, and behold our ancient days before the earth appeared in its vegetated mortality to my mortal vegetated eyes. I see our houses of eternity, which can never be separated, though our mortal vehicles should stand at the remotest corners of heaven from each other.

And noticeably, as time passes, he comes back, by circuits of his own, to the common tongue of devout souls, and drops his invented phrase as though after all it had not enough depth or resonance for the feelings of his heart; and this, though he is still 'drunk with intellectual vision.' But his ideals are the same as ever, and the combination would be piquant were it not, in Blake, entirely reverential and natural :

> It is the greatest of crimes to depress true art and science. . . . I know that such mockers are most severely punished in eternity. I know it, for I see and dare not help. The mocker of art is the mocker of Jesus. Let us go on, dear sir, following His cross : let us take it up daily, persisting in spiritual labours, and the use of that talent which it is death to bury, and of that spirit to which we are called.

Blake stands at the extreme left among those western mystics who have taken up the conceptions and language of the current creed into their own systems. His debt to two of them, whom he certainly studied, has not yet been well ascertained. Jacob Boehme[1] he read in William Law's translation (1764), and the influence has been traced in Blake's treatment of the scriptural books as one long symbol, and in his conception of the severance of Urizen from Eternity, leading to the limitation of his essence and to the fall of man. Swedenborg,[2] though disowned by Blake on account of his concessions to the churches and to the more passive of the Christian virtues, no doubt affected him strongly up to a point. The reality of the spiritual world, with its concrete visions, actually seen, like persons of the household, by the

purged eye; and the modelling of this spiritual world, as to imagery and shape, upon the phenomenal; these are clear resemblances. But beyond this Blake strikes out for himself, and perhaps the kinship between the two seers is rather tribal than individual. They differ from all those mystics who concentrate their direct knowledge of the divine into some single moment of ecstasy, coming once or twice in a lifetime. On the contrary, they live in perpetual communion, not with the nameless essence of divinity, but with a whole crowd of heavenly visitants; the skies, in Ruskin's phrase, 'rain revelations' upon them. Blake, of course, is still further from those mystics (by far the majority) who enjoin ascetic practice and inward stillness and rise through painful and definite stages from one ledge of perception to a higher. The whole process of making his soul by such practices was utterly foreign to him. His likeness to visionaries of other types, like Bruno, is superficial. A pantheist he can only be called in so far as he holds the human soul and the Eternal to be identical, both in man's primitive and in his ultimate regenerate condition, and in so far as the lovely things of nature have a divine element ('heaven in a wild flower'). But as to the actual intermediate state of man, he is, as has been said, an uncompromising dualist. He seems to emphasise the reality, while denying the permanence, of evil.

The earlier mythic books, then, may be taken to figure various incidents in the cycle of the adventures of the human spirit, in its course from freedom and joy, through slavery and darkness, back to something like its first estate. This general view, characteristic of the time, is a noble and poetic one, and in itself as great as Milton's. Blake's treatment of it is unique and original; but the strangest artistic vices are developed by the way, and it can hardly satisfy even minds of his own semi-oriental order, much less minds that, like the present writer's, are in sympathy with the forms of classic and romantic perfection. But it gives a sense of power and expansion merely to watch Blake's experiments; and it is not easy to cease wondering at the springs of native energy which enabled him, at such a time of our literature, even to conceive his enterprise.

These books are all narrative in form, and the persons mythical and imaginary, though historic names and figures, with the queerest connotations, sometimes cross the scene. As in the *Faerie Queene*, or in a dream, the beings introduced are of quite different classes and on different levels, so to speak, of reality.

There are beings, and also places, derived from the Jewish and Christian systems—Jehovah, Jesus, Satan, Jerusalem, Beulah, angels, devils. These seldom mean what they seem to mean, and do not even consistently mean the opposite. Milton, too, is there, with a special significance. Then there are the coinages, sometimes Biblical, sometimes Ossianic [1] in design, but sometimes purely invented—Urizen, Los, Oothoon, and the rest. The stories at first seem independent, but soon they become episodes in the vast religious and quasi-epical theme, which has to be divined from them all taken together, and which is not pre-determined like Milton's, but grows by afterthought upon afterthought. The result is often fatal to structure and expression, for the symbols come to be interpreted, not into ordinary or philosophic speech, but in terms of one another, with shifting values and interminglings infinite. The interludes of spluttering paradox or frantic dogma cannot spoil, but they disconnect, the long passages of pure and lofty execution. Blake's verse cannot long be thought of apart from the surrounding designs. He has deified Energy, and, with a patient yet fiery energy, he flings himself alike upon line, colour, and language; he courts Matter with violence, and stamps himself on her, and 'plants himself in all her nerves.'

Visions of the Daughters of Albion, that extreme and ardent chant, is the first long poem produced by Blake when in the full possession of his moral or anti-moral creed and of his narrative method. It is the fierce or pathetic plaint of innocent natural desire, supposed to be baffled to the last by malign laws of mortal contriving. Oothoon, the victim of the Titanic Bromion, finds that by her unwilling defilement she has offended against the frozen code of marriage law and usage, and is thus severed from her lover Theotormon, himself imbued with their errors. He refuses her love; and her solemn and lofty protestation against the tyranny of the law, her assertion of her claim to joy—distinguished expressly from 'self-love'—and her final frustration, are in Blake's purest lyric style. There is here less of the misshapen, and more of clean plastic power, than in most of the succeeding myths.

Much of *America* is a mere orgy of grotesqueness. Washington and Albion's angel, Orc and Hancock, jostle together in the same episode, while the 'Eternal Lion,' who is by no means the British Lion, 'lashes his tail' and looks on.—Grotesque? Yet the sublime is never far off, and the march of the action is fairly distinct. Orc, a type of liberating rebel, and the announcer of 'sweet delight,' opposes Albion's Angel, who

descends like a plague upon America. Orc is routed for the time, whilst Urizen, the god of the old order, the symbol of frozen law and obsolete faith, descends and stays the victory during the twelve years that separate the American Revolution from the French. In *Europe* the myth begins to overpower all historical reference. The invasion of wider and darker symbol is required to image the continuing fall of man and his deferred release. The 'night' of Enitharmon, a symbol of coercive morality, has lasted for eighteen hundred years, since a false law was riveted upon the world; and now Orc the redeemer, the spirit of happiness, appears together with Los, who is one of the protagonists of light throughout the mythic poems. The rebel Orc descends to his task; Los has 'call'd all his sons to the strife of blood' in the year 1789. Enitharmon awakes and weeps, and now begins the contest for freedom. The abrupt imagery of this poem, which contains some very obscure under-myths, is lit up by starry and sonorous lines; it is a pity that it is defaced by pointless and capricious changes of rhythm.

In *The First Book of Urizen* the chains of man are shown in the forging. Urizen typifies man's bondage under the senses and his consequent 'exile from eternity.' He is the rule, now of blighting abstinence or of social restraint; now of the five senses, which shut off that vision which is the life of the soul; now that of the logical reason, especially that of the apologists and deists; and now that of priestcraft and religion generally. Urizen thus dissolves into a goodly company, which includes Jehovah, Lord Bacon, Voltaire, and even Rousseau. Moreover, he is not only the bondage of man, but man in bondage, who has had happier antecedents, which may perhaps return, but which meanwhile increase the perplexities. All these notions are covered up under the image of a sombre old giant with a long beard, who is sometimes stern and cruel, but is sometimes exhibited as in much agony. This is a fairly simple instance of Blake's symbolic methods. It is not unjust to call such a confusion insane, but the poetry often surpasses that of the age of sanity. The physical changes of Urizen, which signify the generation of man's enslaved body and spirit, inspire a superb piece of metaphysical verse, whose cadence is like that of the grinding of monstrous subterranean mills. Los, the prince of the beneficent armies, fights in vain against his fetters, and Orc is chained to Jealousy. So the web of religion is woven round these sons of Urizen; but all is not lost, for one of them escapes to another land. In the

sequel, *The Book of Ahania*, this escaped son, after enlightening the earth awhile, is smitten by his father. Ahania, the 'parted soul' and the wife of Urizen, whom the same son has torn from their father's being, bewails, in the most thrilling lines that Blake ever wrote, the days when she and her father joyed together. Ahania's significance as a symbol is dark, but, like many of Spenser's characters, she takes on an independent life of her own, apart from the meaning. Such creatures are often the voice of Blake's rarest poetry.

Two brief pieces close the series. *The Book of Los* relates the passing of the golden age and the binding of Urizen by Los. It is a lofty piece of cosmogony. The looming of the 'backbone of Urizen' upon the void at the first glimmerings of light, and the formation of the 'Human Illusion,' a symbol of the deception of the senses, are visions not to be forgotten. In *The Song of Los*, or Song of Time, are shown, in rapid sweeping strokes, the rise and onset of the various religions, each of them the fatal gift of Urizen. The motto might be Samuel Daniel's sentence, 'Religion, the mother of form and fear.' In the East rises abstract philosophy, with its deadening power; and, after a long history, the last manifestation is materialism, or the 'philosophy of the five senses.' At last, in 1789, Orc arises; a war begins of which the end is not yet (1795), and 'Urizen wept.'

IV

The influence of *Paradise Lost* upon this series of lays is apparent, and works in two directions. The phantoms are ranged in two armies, representing the powers of good and evil. There are combats, speeches, forecasts—a good deal of the epic machinery, though it is much transformed; there is the corresponding contrast of physical radiance, glory, and dazzle, with darkness and mist; and there is the epical conflict of emotions—triumph, onset, buoyancy, with despair and wrath. But to these Miltonic elements Blake gives his own turn, which is explained by his famous saying that 'Milton was of the devil's party without knowing it.' That is, Milton's dramatic and his official sympathies were at variance, and he drew the fallen angels, the *popular* party, with power and conviction, and their adversaries more perfunctorily. This is a familiar line of comment on Milton, as well as a true one; and the poems of Blake give effect to it. He transfers to the uses of his own creed the conception of the war waged

in space, with human weapons though not by human beings, between colossal groups of figures, who include the authors or principles of good and ill. The stake is the destiny of man, who has possessed, loses, and is one day to regain a paradise. The devils, however, or incarnations of energy, are now the sons of light; they are the redeemers; they signify 'the freedom of the natural soul'; while their foes, the representatives of reason, law, order, and slavery, include the Christian deity, and all in human history for which his worship stood to Blake. To this 'inverted theology' Milton, 'without knowing it,' lent his scheme.

Into the service of rebellious doctrine Blake, like Mr. Swinburne afterwards, pressed his intimate knowledge of the Bible. Its language and imagery, its movement and colouring, enter into the whole texture of his writing. His mind was nearer than Milton's to the spirit of Hebrew lyric, working as it does Orientally, through figures, apostrophes, and passionate separate affirmations, and not by the chainwork of reasoned Western oratory. 'The terrific numbers are reserved for the terrific parts, and the mild and gentle for the mild and gentle parts'; and in both parts the inspiration is scriptural:

> I will cause my voice to be heard on the clouds that glitter in the sun.
> I will call; and who shall answer me? I shall sing; who shall reply?
> For from my pleasant hills behold the living, living springs,
> Running among my green pastures, delighting among my trees.
> I am not here alone; my flocks, you are my brethren.
> And you, O birds! that sing and adorn the sky, you are my sisters.
> I sing, and you reply to my song; I rejoice, and you are glad.
>
> (*The Four Zoas*, Night ix.)

> My tents are fall'n! my pillars are in ruins! my children dash'd
> Upon Egypt's iron floors and the marble pavements of Assyria.
> I melt my soul in reasonings among the towers of Heshbon;
> Mount Zion is become a cruel rock, and no more dew
> Nor rain; no more the spring of the rock appears; but cold,
> Hard, and obdurate are the furrows of the mountain of wine and oil.
>
> (*Jerusalem.*)

This parallelism, which here contends with and throws out the metre, is not more inveterate in Blake's style than the forms of the lyrical question and proverb. Both of them tend to chequer the verse with prose rhythm. The *Book of Job* and *Revelation* and the prophets are never far off. The sacred books of Urizen are to Blake, after all, an inexhaustible fountain of beauty; nay, at moments he rivals them. Their influence is not all for good, if it be true that from the beginning of *Ezekiel* springs that many-tentacled system of alleged

fourfold 'correspondences' that mars the later Prophetic works, with its endless opposed couples of phantasmal figures —creatures propagated, like some organisms, by rapid fission. But the greatness of these originals, as well as their beauty, is often reproduced. Despite faults that would wreck any smaller poet, and often wrecked himself, Blake has a plastic rage, a *smelting* power, that is hard to parallel. He is Vulcan at work, with a dash of Apollo. His persons are not merely ideas, they are passions; or they are tubes, through which voices come of despair or exultation, in a slow chanting movement. Something must be forgiven to one who created his own immortals. There have been much greater poets, observers, and thinkers than Blake, but few convey so imminent a sense of some great reality that is for ever swaying the thin but effectual screen of words.

A lesser yet still potent influence, that of Macpherson's 'Ossian,'[1] is felt in Blake's versification, and not there only. *Fingal* and *Temora* were in full vogue in Blake's boyhood, and came out less than twenty years before *Poetical Sketches*, which contains one of the many imitations then fashionable. Whatever Johnson and Wordsworth may say, Macpherson (for we need not speak of 'Ossian') could not be wholly an evil genius. He has the true wail of the wandering spirit; he invented a new melancholy. His prose has no depth or fulness, but a sad veiled delicacy of its own. It is true that Blake sometimes faithfully follows its iniquities:

> The strong voice ceas'd, for a terrible blast swept over the heaving sea.
> The Eastern cloud rent; on his cliffs stood Albion's wrathful prince;
> A dragon form, clashing his scales at midnight, he arose
> And flamed red meteors round the land of Albion beneath.

We know this 'glossy and unfeeling diction,' this rhythm that breaks off short and does not keep its promises, these brief clipped clauses. There is plenty of it in Blake, and he falls back on it when he is tired. But some of his greatest passages would have been different without Macpherson behind them; and Blake has lifted his cadences into a harmony and continuous beauty of his own discovering:

> I cry, Arise, O Theotormon! For the village dog
> Barks at the breaking day; the nightingale has done lamenting;
> The lark does rustle in the ripe corn; and the eagle returns
> From nightly prey, and lifts his golden beak to the pure East,
> Shaking the dust from his immortal pinions to awake
> The sun that sleeps too long. Arise, my Theotormon! I am pure,
> Because the night is gone that clos'd me in its deadly black.

It is, however, not much to Macpherson's credit that Blake is metrically in his debt. The inventor of *Fingal* is a slattern in his rhythms, and his prose easily runs into two kinds of unacknowledged verse. One is a monotonous iambic measure of twelve or fourteen syllables; and the blank seven-foot line, in which many of Blake's mythic books (beginning with the gentle *Thel* and the highly Ossianic, but usually dim and feeble *Tiriel*) are written, may well have come to him from Macpherson. It is unlike in march to Chapman's similarly constructed line, but it is often very like this:

(1) At length the sudden clang is waked on all the echoing shields.
(2) Each takes his hill by night; at intervals they darkly stand.
(3) Unequal bursts the hum of songs between the roaring wind.
(*Fingal*, bk. i.)

It is therefore probable that Macpherson's vices were Blake's opportunities. Certainly, in the series of lays from the gentle *Book of Thel* onwards, this measure, in its unrhymed form, is created, and nobly employed, for English verse. It is varied, and suppled, and broken up, and run on with patient or instinctive art. The beauty and resources of the measure can be judged from scattered examples:

(1) O bright Ahania || a boy is born of the dark ocean.
(2) Walk | heavy! || soft and bent || are the bones of villagers.
(3) 'Queen of the vales,' || the matron clay answer'd, || 'I heard thy sighs.'
(4) O cruel! || O destroyer! || O consumer! || O avenger!
(5) Laughs at affection, || glories in rebellion, || scoffs at love.

It was one of the ill angels, or 'spectres,' that led Blake, in *Jerusalem* and *Milton*, lured by the show of freedom, to give up all metre in name, whilst recurring to it when off his guard; the result being sometimes a repulsive jumble of verse and prose as bad as Macpherson's own. But through most of the earlier lays there is a run of even yet varied melody.

For *Urizen*, *Ahania*, and *The Book of Los*, a shorter measure is used, which may come from the same source; a choppy, rapid, breathless line, made up (in technical terms) of three amphibrachs, with or without a spare syllable at the end. The type is near to that of Prudentius's resurrection hymn,

Nunc maesta quiesce querela,

and is shown in such verses as

Enraged in the desolate darkness,

or

And these were the changes of Urizen.

But this base is so ruggedly modified by Blake as often to leave little of it remaining except the fundamental, triple hammer-stroke :

> His cold horrors silent, dark Urizen
> Prepar'd ; his ten thousands of thunders
> Rang'd in gloom'd array stretch out across
> The dread world ; and the rolling of wheels
> As of swelling seas sound in his clouds,
> In his hills of stor'd snows, in his mountains
> Of hail and ice : voices of terror
> Are heard, like thunders of autumn
> When the cloud blazes over the harvests. (*Urizen.*)

It is curious to find that whole paragraphs of Macpherson can be marked off into series of three-beat units roughly resembling this metre. It is the medium of Blake's most vehement passages, in which he seems to toss and sport with the unhewn and unmoulded elements of the chaos as it gathers into a world, leaving far behind and out of knowledge the faltering if unmistakable tune of such an original as this :

> What voice is that I hear ? | that voice like the summer wind ? | I sit not by the nodding rushes ; | I hear not the fount of the rocks. | Afar, Vinvela, afar, | I go to the wars of Fingal. | My dogs attend me no more ; | no more I tread the hill. | No more from on high I see thee, | fair-moving by the stream of the plain ; | bright as the bow of heaven ; | as the moon on the western wave. | (*Carric-Thura.*)

V

The *Songs of Experience*, though they must be studied along with the mythic lays, do not all bear openly on the poet's metaphysics. Many of them are in the nature of 'songs of innocence' re-written, as it were retracted, in a sadder and abstruser mood. In the new *Holy Thursday* and *Chimney Sweeper* theory has injured song, and first thoughts were better. *The Little Girl Lost* and *The Little Girl Found* might have been songs of innocence but for the stranger notes of fear and pity that they strike, and for their suggestion of the desolate haunted country of the lays. *Ah! Sunflower* seems at first but a lovely image, yet it accords with Blake's ruling thoughts, and tells of the resurrection of buried love and baffled desire, ready for their reunion in eternity. Most

of these *Songs* are written under the shadow of Urizen. The soul has now 'lapsed' from its memory of immortal things, the rose of beauty is gnawed by the worm, and innocence, oppressed under the law of jealousy and error, is saddened by the sight, and still more by the sensation, of hatred. Moral law itself, the gaoler, takes on deceptively beautiful shapes, figured in *Tirzah*, and keeps the senses in a mysterious thraldom. Even pity and love now depend for their existence on the pain and misery of others; and these are the words of the Devil:

> Pity would be no more
> If we did not make somebody poor;
> And Mercy no more would be
> If all were as happy as we.

This law is figured as a 'poison tree,' a tree of mystery, which gratifies the new thirst for vengeance. *The Tiger* is not a simple-minded utterance of wonder at the unexpected resources of Paley's clockmaker God; and Blake's answer to the question, 'Did He who made the lamb make thee?' is not in the affirmative. The 'tiger' is a creation of another dynasty altogether, and belongs to the present reign of terror, not to man's primal or to his ultimate world.

Instead of the creatures of beauty and gentleness which explain themselves and raise no problem, here is one in whom beauty is united with an ominous strength and a deadly purpose. Whence can these proceed but from the same qualities in its Maker? The potent anvil-music[1] of this great poem, reminding us of some lyrics of Ibsen, is in contrast with that of *Earth's Answer*, which in sentiment can be paralleled from *The Book of Ahania*. Here, as often, Blake manages to convey the accent of human feeling through his half-human voices, which come faint and clear, as if from another planet, across leagues of space:

> Prison'd on wat'ry shore,
> Starry Jealousy does keep my den;
> Cold and hoar,
> Weeping o'er,
> I hear the father of the ancient men.

For any such purity of lyric phrase and solemnity of solitary pain we have to go back past Milton. The *Songs of Experience* mark an epoch in the history of our serious lyrical verse. Blake's immunity from all false intervening styles, and his independence, now achieved, of the Elizabethan style, crown him as the true recoverer of song. His gift is now fully tested

upon his mature experience and thinking, as in *Songs of Innocence* it could not be; and is tested triumphantly, for no one else can evoke, by the mere fall of the words, the same distant and terrible but beautiful apparitions. The change of temper is echoed in the new rhythms that Blake has come to command. The briefer, tinier measures of *Songs of Innocence* are reinforced by others, not always longer or more complex, but weighted with a richer vowel-music, and tending to a slow, menacing movement, of which the rhymed short couplet is the vehicle:

> In what distant deeps or skies
> Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
> On what wings dare he aspire?
> What the hand dare seize the fire?

To this gnomic form, in which each couplet is self-contained and has the effect of an inscription on the tomb or of a brand upon the forehead, Blake, in his later poetry, often reverted. *Songs of Experience* was the last book of lyric that he engraved or issued; but there is a considerable body of such verse besides that he left in manuscript, which must not be judged as approved by him for publication, but which contains some of his strangest and loveliest, as well as of his crudest and most experimental writing.

Some of this occurs in his letters and Prophetic books, but it is chiefly contained in the two manuscripts known as the Rossetti MS. and the Pickering MS., which are now at last duly edited and accessible. The former MS. contains poems written about, but not long before, 1793, and also poems written from 1800 to 1810, as well as *The Everlasting Gospel*. In the latter is found a series of symbolic pieces dating from his stay at Felpham (1800-3). It is best here merely to note this distribution, and to group this whole body of work by theme and style. Many of the topics of *Songs of Experience* are handled again. There are verses in honour of love ('Love to faults is always blind'), and expressive of Blake's fierce and buoyant anti-ascetical temper, such as *In a Myrtle Shade* and *Soft Snow*, and 'Abstinence sows sand all over.' There are more songs of sorrow and adult experience, like *The Wild Flower's Song* and *The Smile*. Others are assaults on priest-craft and dogma, such as *Infant Sorrow*, *The Land of Dreams*, and *The Grey Monk*. Many of them are penetrated with symbol, or perturbed by it, but are still clearly to be distinguished from the mythic histories, or short lays, that are cast in lyrical or semi-lyrical form, and are sometimes as hard to

interpret as the Prophetic works themselves. *The Mental Traveller*, *The Crystal Cabinet*, and *The Golden Net* remain like some beautiful and elaborate script in a half-known tongue. In the first of these the technical terms are less apparent, and the language is that of pure poetry, but it implies one of Blake's abstrusest and most suggestive theories —that, namely, of a series of mental 'states' which remain ever the same and self-subsistent, and distinct from the individual souls that pass through them. In this fashion Blake elsewhere gives his own turn to the problem of evil, and conciliates its existence with his idealism. The individual is defined not by his morality, but by his species :

> Goodness or badness has nothing to do with character. An apple-tree, a pear-tree, a horse, a lion, are characters ; but a good apple-tree or a bad is an apple-tree still. A horse is not more a lion for being a bad horse—that is its character ; its goodness or badness is another consideration.

Thus good and evil cannot attach permanently to the individual. Some such order of ideas lies at the root, it seems, of *The Mental Traveller*, which receives many broken lights from the later Prophetic books. *The Crystal Cabinet*, once read as a description of the phenomena of gestation, is now pronounced to treat of the moral law and the passions. The poems, however, like many things in the Hebrew prophets, haunt the imagination independently of this or any meaning, and perhaps are better without the meaning. It is otherwise with the visionary rhymes written by Blake from Felpham in his letters to Butts. Here he is not always relating an episode in the murky war of Mansoul ; but he tells of the angels amongst whom he literally walked, and these verses, with their scenes of immortal brightness, and their composed but glorious ecstasy, are the diary of his almost disembodied spirit at its highest tide of illumination. The technique is worthy of the mood, with its rushing short lines, improvised, breathless, and ringing on their soon-recurrent rhymes, in the first letter to Butts ; and, in the sterner but not less impetuous ones of the second letter, the music of *Christabel* is for the first time fully recovered and rivalled by any poet :

> When I had my defiance given,
> The sun stood trembling in Heaven ;
> The moon, that glow'd remote below,
> Became leprous and white as snow ;

And every soul of men on the earth
Felt affliction, and sorrow, and sickness, and dearth.
Los flam'd in my path, and the sun was hot
With the bows of my mind and the arrows of thought.

None of Blake's epigrams were meant to be printed, and they must not be taken too solemnly, if their sharp wild wit is crossed with a streak of comic and boyish spleen. One bundle of such rhymed sentences, however, namely *Auguries of Innocence*, stands apart, and may be treated as a pendant to the *Proverbs of Hell*, printed earlier in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Their exaltation of childlike faith—faith, be it remembered, in the right things—above reasoning doubt, and of love and brotherhood above ruinous wars and rancour, is not unexpected, though it is here cast less into song than into motto-form. Blake's wrathful affection for the animal world, which he sees tortured under the reign of cruelty, is already also familiar, and is another point of contact with his time. He admits not only bird and beast, but the emmet, caterpillar, moth and fly, who flit through his designs and at once become serviceable emblems, and themselves warriors against doubt. But this poem, with its separate volleys of chain-shot, noble and piquant as it is, does not prepare us for the continuous roar of artillery, for the daring and onset, in Blake's greatest militant poem, *The Everlasting Gospel*.[1]

This work lies in fragments which are now seen to piece themselves into something like a whole. It was much recast, and never published. Dated not earlier than 1810, it is later than *Milton* and *Jerusalem*,[2] and is pronounced 'the latest of Blake's surviving poems, with the possible exception of *The Keys of the Gates*.' It is little crossed by symbol; indeed the clue to it is that Blake means precisely what he says. It is the fruit at once of his vehement antinomianism and of his reverence for what he judges to be the doctrine of Christ, the great preacher of the love that casteth out law. But Christ is also a man of war, and his traditional attributes[3] are stormily denied. Was it 'gentleness' to rebuke his parents and 'bind old Satan in his chain'? Was it 'humility' to use the elders and priests 'like dogs,' and to wait for his 'revenge' at the Last Day (presumably upon 'bad art and science')? Was it a lesson in 'chastity' to dismiss the woman, whose real sin was to harbour false motives for love—'custom or covet,' whence arise adulteries indeed? It is curious how Tolstoy's tenets of celibacy and non-resistance, which he founds on the same documents, fit Blake's like the other half of a broken

plate. The workmanship of this mighty unfinished manifesto ranges from Blake's finest to his roughest. He slips into doggerel down at heel, or runs on in sharp jingling Hudibrastic rhymes, or rises to such winged verse as that which hymns the downfall of the Mosaic law. The tune sank into Rossetti, in whose *Jenny* it seems to be audible ; there is the same sardonic passion. It might be hard, for a moment, to say which poet had written the lines,

> 'Twas covet, or 'twas custom, or
> Some trifle not worth caring for ;
> That they may call a shame and sin
> Love's Temple that God dwelleth in.

VI

In *The Everlasting Gospel*, Blake's thought and style recover from the progressive darkening and confusion that meet us in his three longest Prophetic poems, which were all begun, if not completed, at an earlier date. In these he attempted to expand the lay into the epic, and thought of *Jerusalem* and *Milton*, it seems, as the crown of his poetic work. He failed ; he was wrong. He lost hold on the ordinary associations of words ; he multiplied his symbols, and their meanings more than ever shift and dislimn like the clouds that Polonius read as Hamlet pleased. Still worse is the lack of composition ; the order of the episodes is often a matter of indifference. Blake, in his revolt against classicism, proclaimed that 'Gothic is living form' ; but he never saw, what Coleridge explained, that the most complex works of 'Gothic' poetry, such as Shakespeare's tragedies, are creatures of law—of a law self-evolved and self-justified, but a law none the less. His celestial friends, whose messages he would not alter, left him with only a lawless Gothic. It is tempting to say that if Blake can ever be charged with insanity, it is in the arrangement and pattern of these works. But it is rather a case of gigantic wrong-headedness or misreckoning. He is like some Titan who might catch up shapeless boulders, and, without any inkling of the law of strains and pressures, strive to heap them into a vast tower or air-hung bridge. The general design can be made out, and stray pieces of shapen fabric. This design in all three books is much the same. Each of them is, in Dante's sense, a kind of 'comedy'—the beginning overcast and gloomy, the issue bright and joyous. Man is at last regenerate, and those elements of his soul are reunited which

have been torn apart by the wars of his fallen state. As before, these elements are figured by symbols, subdivided and intershifting without end. The style, though most variable, is far better than the composition. However dark in detail, or blown up into a wind of words, or deformed by repulsive catalogues, or by the more odious devices of Blake's algebra, it rises, not a dozen but a hundred times, into strength, beauty, purity and melody.

The Four Zoas, dated 1797, and begun three years before at the earliest, was apparently never meant to be engraved or issued, and portions of it were drafted into *Jerusalem*. There is more good poetry in it than in its successors, and Blake is more at leisure. The metre is less frequently broken or abandoned. Some strands can be picked out of the ravelled story. One clue is found in the adventures of Albion or the human spirit, who is parted from his eternal home, is plunged in a long intervening sleep, and is at last restored to his first estate. This is 'the death and judgment of Albion the ancient man.' Meanwhile he comes under the sway of the 'four Zoas,' or principles of the soul, who have split off from one another, and have again split individually, each into his good and evil element, his 'emanation' or 'spectre.' Their wars and dealings figure the present divided condition of mankind; and from these battles result 'the torments of love and jealousy,' a phrase that Blake introduced into his title. The Zoas, headed by Los, wander over space, and the fall of another of their number, Urizen, is once more told. At last each 'spectre' and its 'emanation' meet again, and the four Zoas are once more blended in eternal life. The process is thus from unity through difference back to unity. No such statement as this can even intimate the complexities of the work, the numberless incidents and their import, or the huge wheelwork of 'correspondences' or analogies that besets the whole. Amongst the stray splendours of *The Four Zoas* might be cited the lyric, occurring in the fifth Night, of the woes of Urizen; and in the second Night the chant—also cast in regular metre—of Enitharmon over Los; the war-song of the 'demons of the deep' in the seventh Night; the evangel, in the eighth, uttered by Ahania; and, in the last, the recovery of Ahania by Urizen. The symbols of light, imagination, and prophecy prevail, and 'sweet science reigns.'

In *Jerusalem*, begun in 1804, the web of symbol is denser and more confounding: like *Milton*, this poem can only disgust save in selections, but without such selections the

genius of the writer will not be understood. It contains long passages of rare and achieved beauty. The concluding colloquy of Jesus with Albion is a fervent and stately picture of the dream that Blake dreamed for his fellow-men. Amongst other passages that stand out from the background of welter are that in which the desolation of Albion is mourned, and the description of the symbolic house, built by Los, in a Spenserian style of architecture. Over another enormous survey, that of the countries of the earth, Blake sweeps with the wing of Marlowe. The dialogue of Joseph and Mary upon sin and forgiveness is exquisite in form. On a lower level, there is the sounding tirade of Los to the giants of Albion. There are many other beautiful things, but the critics, not unjustly, have beggared language in lamenting the general fogginess and incoherence of the book. The wandering figure styled by Blake Jerusalem, who is a personage and not a place, is buffeted amongst the alien or hostile elements generated in consequence of the fall of man. Some of the four Zoas now reappear, but they are less conspicuous than before, and the emphasis is now laid upon the false creeds and moral codes that mankind invents to deceive and fetter itself in the course of its pilgrimage. Amongst these are not only the Christian confessions, but the theories of the deists, whom Blake denounces as a product of the age of frigid reason. 'There is no natural religion,' he exclaims elsewhere; the heart and imagination, he thinks, were as little concerned with the creation of Voltaire's deity as with that of Jehovah. *Jerusalem* ends with the abolition of error and the accomplishment of the reign of love amidst the rejoicings of universal nature. Such a close reminds us of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and in single passages Blake is the peer of Shelley; but no great poet has ever managed, by the conduct of his story, so completely to revolt the artistic judgment.

In his preface to *Jerusalem* Blake, borrowing the phrase of Milton, declares his rebellion, not only against the modern bondage of rhyming, but against metre itself, which he calls 'monotonous cadence,' and as 'much a bondage as rhyme itself.'

> I therefore have produced a variety in every line, both of cadences and number of syllables. Every word and every letter is studied, and put in its fit place. The terrific numbers are reserved for the terrific parts, the mild and gentle for the mild and gentle parts, and the prosaic for inferior parts: all are necessary to each other.

The rhythmical prose thus adopted is a form full of loveliness and resource, and it can only be objected that Blake does not allow himself sufficient freedom in its use. He keeps a prevailingly iambic cadence, and often slips back into the long metrical line ; or else he comes too near to doing so, and recalls the effect that Lydgate produces by his mangling of Chaucer's versification. But he constantly attains a measured Biblical movement of high dignity : and the same harmonies, as well as the same discords and shortcomings, are perceptible in *Milton*.

This, possibly the latest of Blake's works, is his mythical account of the 'progress of poetry.' The familiar *dramatis personæ* reappear, but with a difference. Many fall into the background : the symbolism is less tangled, and the story more traceable than in *Jerusalem*. Milton is the type of the poetic imagination, or of prophecy. His departed spirit quits the Eternals to be the messenger of their harmonies, travels long through space and its imaginary worlds, a destined deliverer of the human soul. John Milton, however, in his mortal career had been distracted between his true mission and the temptations of a false creed, and crowned his offences by imitating the ancient classics ; and now, after the voyage, transmigrates, accompanied by Ololon, another representative of inspiration, into the body of William Blake, then sojourning at Lambeth. After huge struggles and vicissitudes, the reign of imagination and the renewal of the human spirit are assured. The gospel of courage and energy makes 'self-annihilation' perfect ; free invention triumphs over cold, laborious art, and the aim is attained

> To cast aside from poetry all that is not inspiration,
> That it no longer shall dare to mock with the aspersion of madness
> Cast on the inspired by the tame high finisher of paltry blots,
> Indefinite or paltry rhymes, or paltry harmonies :

—four lines that well show Blake's æsthetic doctrine, and his lapse into the verse that he disowned. *Milton* shows throughout the fluctuations of this metre. In the lovely and full-throated chant of birds and flowers, the 'Vision of the lamentation of Beulah,' it falls back with more or less docility into the long regular line, with its daring and haunting modulations, while the movement of *Ecclesiastes* or *Revelation* is heard in such Asiatically rich passages as the formation and adornment of the human passions by the sons of Los. Amongst other happy islets in *Milton* may be named the dance of the sons of Luvah, and the adaptation from *Paradise Lost* of the 'great

solemn assembly,' where the guilt and destinies of the human soul are prophesied.

VII

All Blake's writings in ordinary unmeasured prose are brief, and their bulk is not large. They are to be found in his letters; in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; in the prefaces to *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, and in the fragments called *Sibylline Leaves*; also in the short series of engraved maxims, *There is no Natural Religion*; in the marginal notes he made to Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and to Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses*; and, above all, in his *Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures, Poetical and Historical Inventions* (1809), which includes *Sir Jeffrey Chaucer and the Nine-and-twenty Pilgrims*; and in the two series of notes, one concerning his picture, *A Vision of the Last Judgment*, and the other styled by earlier editors the *Public Address*. The two last-named works were never published, and should be read in their original disjointed form. Blake can write in a plain strong-headed way, not Sibylline at all, as is evident in his business communications, and in his letter relating his encounter with the soldier at Felpham. The descriptive parts in the *Vision of the Last Judgment* have the same exactness, and are, as he would have said, 'determinate.' This clear cutting is found more constantly in his prose than in his verse, and is only enhanced by his occasional use, which is always precise, of such technical words as 'vegetated,' 'demon,' or 'spectrous.' But it is always accompanied by passion. Blake says, 'Passion and expression are beauty itself'; and he has them both. His prose is full of light, glow, and energy. In the letters from Felpham, it is a worthy setting to the verse, and there could be no better praise. In general, it falls into one or other of the forms, namely aphorism and visionary picture, that are natural to Blake. The account of the Canterbury Pilgrims is the nearest in mould to the ordinary critical essay; it is not more discontinuous than a good deal in Hazlitt, and it remains Blake's shrewdest and wisest comment on the actual life of men, as distinct from the life of vision. But this it is, because he sees the life of men *sub specie æternitatis*. He perceives, travelling by his own path, the grand excellence of Chaucer's *Prologue*, namely, that it represents eternal types of mankind. This is true, and is much more important to remember than the commonplace truth that Chaucer gives us a 'picture of the age,' or of the persons he had seen. These 'characters,'

Blake says, 'are those which compose all ages and nations . . . they are the physiognomies or lineaments of universal human life.' Chaucer himself is such a 'character,' for 'he is the great poetical observer of men, who is in every age born to record and eternise its acts.' Blake in all this reads into Chaucer something not in Chaucer's mind; but every great critic, who is himself a creator, must do the same when approaching another creator. We may leave academicians to do less than this. We are not troubled by hearing that the Sompnour is 'a Devil of the first magnitude,' or the Ploughman, 'Hercules in his supreme eternal state, divested of his spectrous shadow.' This typical character Blake realises in the heads he draws for his picture, and his criticism, it must be remembered, is as much on his own picture as upon the poem. He is himself, it may be said, one character the more; he is the seer of these eternal types, in which most people only discover Harry Bailey and his convoy. His splenetic remarks on Stothard and others are not mere injustice, but they belong to his mortal part and may be left aside.

The *Vision*, the *Catalogue*, and the *Address* are a treasury of Blake's critical and æsthetic opinions, which are bordered on one side by his conception of 'vision' and on the other by his ethical code. It is not easy to make his tenets clearer than he has done himself. He does not set them out with method. His mind is best revealed in *pensées* or detached observations; indeed he is one of the last great masters of that form of writing. He thinks in proverbs. The *Address* gives his canons of fine art; it is the glorification of line, of drawing, and of 'execution,' by which Blake primarily means line: 'painting is drawing on canvas, and engraving is drawing on copper, and nothing else.' The attacks on Rubens, Rembrandt, and Titian complicate this clear article of faith. In the *Vision* and the *Catalogue* and the smaller prose fragments the conception is larger. The now familiar doctrine, of the eternity of the types which are seen by the imagination in a state of vision, is handled again. The most important distinction brought out, and one which ought to be taken to heart 'for the sake of eternal life,' is that between allegory and vision. The first is 'formed by the daughters of Memory,' or the deliberate reason; the second is 'surrounded by the daughters of inspiration.' Saturn is invented to express the iron age; and this is allegory; yet there is some vision at once involved, when Saturn is figured as 'a very aged man.' Otherwise he is not a creature of vision; he is not seen. He is not, therefore, one

with his meaning. Moreover, allegories 'are things that relate to moral virtues,' which, unhappily, 'do not exist'; that is, are not begotten of the imagination, and are products, we may suppose, of the reign of Urizen. They imply a curbing of the passions; but that is not the way to heaven, which comes through cultivation of the 'understanding'—a different faculty, be it noted, in Blake's dialect, from 'reason.' It is the faculty that shall prevail at the Last Judgment, that 'overwhelming of bad art and science.' By 'understanding' Blake seems to mean simply the perception of truth—of *his* truth. We are not to look for the missing links in his argument, or for attention to the ordinary terms of philosophy, in all this; but there is little real obscurity. The theory of the permanence of 'characters,' or the essential forms of things in 'eternity,' is enlarged on with Blake's loftiest eloquence. His ignorance of book-theory was an advantage to him; it enabled him to say some of the best things in the language on imagination and poetry.

Partly owing to his method of publication, Blake had no influence on English literature before 1860, but he was not unregarded by men of letters.[1] Southey paid him tribute. Wordsworth, whom Blake thought, after all reservations, a 'great man' and 'the only poet of the age,' observed to Crabb Robinson:

> There is no doubt this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott.

Landor shrewdly wished that Wordsworth and Blake could have 'divided' Blake's madness between them; 'for some accession of it in the one case, and some diminution in the other, would very greatly have improved both.' Thus can the poets speak of one another. Coleridge, in one of his letters, makes a carefully capricious class-list of the *Songs of Innocence* and *Experience*, placing some of the best of them in the fourth rank. Lamb praised the 'spirited criticism on Chaucer,' which was 'so mystical and so full of vision,' and also *The Tiger*, and called Blake 'one of the most extraordinary persons of the age.' Crabb Robinson's reports of him in his later years are the best of all, in the veracity of their 'sharp and wiry line.' Despite such attentions, Blake was long chiefly remembered as an artist of curious power, who had written verses to accompany his pictures. Three short memoirs were produced between his death and 1863, when Gilchrist, an art

critic who died prematurely, revealed him as a mighty and ignored designer, and published his lyrical writings, the text being edited, after the manner of corrupt classics, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti ; nor was a true text to be rescued from the neglect or falsification of successive editors until the twentieth century. In 1868 came Swinburne's masterpiece of appraisal, at once impassioned and precise. A scattered trail of editions and explanations followed, but the second retrieval of Blake's fame dates from within the last twenty years. We are now in sight of having all that he wrote, just as he wrote it.

Blake is not one of those lesser figures that, after a generation, fall into a dim but established place in the general esteem. Nor is he one of the great poets, like Keats, whose rank comes to settle itself. He is with Wordsworth and Shelley, who hold no such position, but over whom each age disputes in the light of its own ideas and revulsions. But one thing we see, that this stranded artist was near the heart of the romantic Renaissance, and that in him centre and originate some poetic and spiritual forces which have only become intelligible long afterwards. He was alone, and yet in company ; he worked, after all, along with others, without their knowledge or his own. His art and creed are much determined by his rebellion against the age of criticism, reason, and science ; of which, again, on his negative side, he is also the creature. He announces the claims of individual thought, of natural passion, and of free imagination, in a manner more unaffected than Byron's, more masculine and humane than Shelley's, and earlier than both. He has a deeper sense of beauty than any Englishman of his generation. He is also the true renewer of a great and lovely poetical style, especially in lyric ; and he is this, while the poets of *Lyrical Ballads* are still struggling in the bird-lime of conventional diction. He is not now hidden, as Cowper is a little hidden, by those who began to write after him. His poetic note, at its best, strikes on our ear as undulled and as independent of Fashion, whom his contemporary, Leopardi, calls 'the sister of Death.' A stray sentence written by Blake on a margin in Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom* gives much of his mind in a few words :

> He who loves feels love descend into him, and if he has wisdom, may perceive it from the poetic genius, which is the Lord.

CHAPTER VI

THE NOVEL OF MANNERS AND JANE AUSTEN

I. Fiction during the transition, 1780-1812; relation to the four great novelists of the eighteenth century. Main divisions: (*a*) the novel of English life and manners; new lineage of women writers; (*b*) the novel of 'terror' or 'suspense' (see Ch. VII.). Cross tendencies: interest in doctrine, in history and foreign lands, and in natural scenery.

II. Stray examples, 1770-80: *The Spiritual Quixote.* Mackenzie. Work of Miss Burney. Instructive fiction; scheme of the 'progress' and the moral 'contrast.'

III. Mrs. Inchbald's two stories. Male doctrinaires: Bage's *Hermsprong.* Holcroft's tales. Cumberland's *Henry.* Mrs. Opie's tales, their range and qualities. Miss Edgeworth: view of life; short stories for the young. Purpose of the Irish novels: *Castle Rackrent*; *The Absentee*, etc. Day, *Sandford and Merton.* Hannah More. Mrs. Hamilton.

IV. Miss Austen; social world she portrays; stages of her work. The Steventon novels: *Sense and Sensibility*; *Pride and Prejudice*, nature of its pre-eminence; *Northanger Abbey* (see Ch. VII.); *Lady Susan.* The Chawton novels: *Mansfield Park*; *Emma*; *Persuasion.* Miss Austen not 'impersonal'; increase of kindliness; scenery.

V. Miss Austen; her reading and possible models. Vocabulary, its purity. Method of work; view of poetry. Avoidance of tragedy and passion; summary severity. Her feminine point of view; valediction.

I

THE 'poetic genius, which is the Lord,' was also astir, during the last decade of the century, in Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; but its record must now be forsaken awhile, in order to notice other workings of the English mind and imagination, in prose. And first of fiction,[1] which for thirty years remains in a transitional state, and whose rebirth is much later than that of poetry. The great age of the novel ends after *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) and *Humphry Clinker* (1771), to be renewed in *Sense and Sensibility* (published 1811), and in *Waverley* (1814). But the generation of writers that come between are not all mere dusty forerunners of Scott and Miss Austen. They have left some good stories; there is Miss Burney, there is Beckford to sustain us. Some of their work has suffered from *Northanger Abbey* what the rhymed

romances suffer from Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*; it is chiefly remembered in parody. But Mrs. Opie and Mrs. Inchbald, *Caleb Williams* and Maturin's *Women*, ought not thus to perish of mockery. To go back to them is somewhat like going back from Chaucer to *The Owl and the Nightingale*, or *The Fox and the Wolf*. Sometimes, indeed, they serve as a lively prelude to the greater writers. There are scenes in *Cecilia* that forecast *Pride and Prejudice*, and the talk of Targe and Buchanan in Dr. John Moore's *Zeluco* is a passage of robust Scottish humour composed long before *Waverley*. But we often come on something that Scott and Miss Austen do not give at all. The sardonic wit and fevered fantasy of Beckford have no following, and the tortures of Caleb Williams in his wanderings or of Monçada in his dungeon, are never outdone in their own kinds. It is true that few of these intervening writers can write a book. They should be sifted into an anthology of scenes and passages, which might well be accompanied by the *Lives* that Scott prefixed to Ballantyne's *Novelists' Library*; a series of criticisms in his loose, shrewd, generous style, which often show us how he stood towards his precursors, and what he could and could not, and also what he need not, learn from them.

The four chief novelists of the mid-century at once left their traces; but none of them founded a real school, and their true influence was postponed, or deflected abroad. Fielding had imitators like Richard Cumberland; but his large easy posture of mind, at home amongst all sorts of men, and his power of taking life as it is, without excitement or acidity, are not found again before Scott. His knowledge of the English high roads, with their humours and noises, reappears in Dickens, and some of his sharper irony, the irony of *Jonathan Wild*, in *Barry Lyndon*. Smollett created the angry novel, a most honourable and British species, and his pure and classic language gives him permanence; the influence of his externality, and of his lively, if often machine-made characters, upon the author of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, is well known. Richardson was a great inventor of types—Lovelace, Clarissa, Grandison—which sank into the general mind, as can be seen in French and German fiction; but at home his unreal style, sometimes heated and sometimes pedantic, did ill service, for nothing leaves posterity so cold as the rhetoric of the emotions. His analytic power and skill in maintaining a hectic suspense, and his occasional tragic pathos, keep him alive. Sterne's disciples, like Henry Mackenzie, 'the man of feeling,' caught

everything but his wit, insight, and execution, all consummate. Thus the history of our fiction from 1780 to 1814 is only in a small measure the history of these influences.

The novel does not grow, in the sense of getting better and better, during this period, but it does grow in variety and fertility, and its lines of direction [1] become plainer. Of such broad lines there are two, which sometimes cross one another, and which are themselves crossed and confused by slighter ones. First of all is continued the central, congenial business of eighteenth-century fiction, namely the portraiture of English life and manners in a spirit that is positive rather than poetical; a work begun by Defoe, and carried to its utmost by Fielding, with Smollett by his side. But the difference after 1780 is this, that the Salic law is now abolished, and that women come into the kingdom of which they have shared the rule, with intervals, ever since. This lineage begins with *Evelina* (1778); Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Opie, Miss Edgeworth follow, and then comes Miss Austen, who escapes their weaknesses and perfects her own form of art, so that the shades of that dimmer dynasty behind and beside her, on whose 'heels a fresh perfection treads,' require now to be evoked with some energy. But some of them are more daring than Miss Austen; the situation in Mrs. Inchbald's *Nature and Art*, and the talk of Miss Burney's cads and eccentrics, bear no painfully feminine stamp. In one way the scope of the novel is enlarged by them all. Many of their tales might bear the old title of 'Women beware women.' For the first time in England, women are nicely depicted by their own sex, sometimes with heart and sympathy, but oftener with that cool, intimate veracity which is so salutary, but which omits so much of the essence of women as men see them. This instinct, in any case, lies near the heart of the *counter-romance*, the passion for realism, which will meet us so constantly in the age of romance, and which may be thought of as the spirit of the eighteenth century living on and asserting itself against the rebels.

Naturally, there can be no strict classification according to sex. There are male intruders into this domain, like Bage and Holcroft; and, on the other hand, Mrs. Radcliffe and Mrs. Shelley figure amongst the second and contrasting group of novelists, who will be reviewed in the next chapter and who work alongside of the romantic poets. Their work is sometimes styled the 'novel of terror,' but the 'novel of suspense' is a wider term; such a title as the 'satanic novel' sounds portentous, but might be justified literally by reference to the

favourite type of villain exhibited in these stories, with his blasted front, his look of defiance and command, his power to argue and seduce, and his perfunctory touches of human feeling. It was in this spirit that Burns 'bought a pocket Milton,' that he might study the 'intrepid, unyielding independence,' and other qualities, of 'that great personage, Satan.' Beckford, Lewis, and Maturin played their part, as will be seen, not only in developing the pattern, but in the revival of the artistic senses, and of the art of plotting out a story.

The frontiers between the novel of manners and the novel of suspense are blurred by several cross-lines of tendency. One of these is the inclination to the didactic and doctrinal. There is a strong infusion of moral and social ideas, often of a revolutionary cast, and a great deal of tedious set discussion. The rights of men, women, children and animals, and the bearing of those rights on education, law, government and marriage, come up with more or less emphasis in the pages of writers as different as Godwin and Miss Edgeworth. In Scott and Miss Austen this excrescence disappears, and their art is not opinionated. A second interest is that felt in history.[1] Some of Scott's forgotten precursors return to past ages, or extend the scene to foreign lands with their scenery and memorials. The novels of the Misses Lee and the Italian tales of Mrs. Radcliffe are examples. Thirdly, the growing love for landscape is a recurrent feature of the transitional novel. This, as we have seen, is an instinct which letters share with painting, prose with poetry, and the novelists with the travellers and the theorists on the 'picturesque.' Thus the interest in doctrine, the interest in history and foreign places, and the interest in nature, are found in varying measure throughout both the chief schools of fiction. It is simpler to take each of the schools chronologically, and to let these minor features appear in course of the survey.

II

A few examples,[2] earlier than 1780, of the trail left by the great novelists may be referred to. Fielding's scene—the English inn-yard, the parsonage, the disreputable town house—is reproduced in the curious and pleasant comic romance called *The Spiritual Quixote, or the Summer's Ramble of Mr. Geoffrey Wildgoose* (1774), by the Rev. Richard Graves, also a translator of Marcus Aurelius and La Casa. But the horse-play and billingsgate and rude satire more resemble Smollett's,

and the adventures in London of the innocent Miss Townsend recall his livelier episodes. Wildgoose, who might be called a Methodist[1] Hudibras, is a young man of means, bitten with the doctrines of Wesley and Whitfield, who are introduced in person. He wanders round the Midlands preaching and attracting not only crowds but occasionally dirt and addled eggs, and hears many confidences, which are sewn, after Fielding's manner, into the book as separate tales. There are also gentler tones, and a certain shamefaced liking for the picturesque, and we are carried to the Leasowes, where it was practised by the author's friend, Mr. Shenstone. The book is pure eighteenth century in the narrower sense; but there is a grudging recognition of the Wesleyans and their 'enthusiasm.'

Sterne, too, had his following; his charm, his suddenness, his unscrupulous use of his intimacy with life, were his own; but his too famous 'sensibility' was exaggerated in *The Man of Feeling* (1771), by Henry Mackenzie, the 'Scottish Addison,' who also drew something from Richardson. The hero of this tale, Harley, is a cheerful, but usually also a foolish giver, and is considerably swindled by the objects of his benevolence. His ready tears are a perennial and unintended source of entertainment to the reader. There is, however, also some sharpness of drawing, and Mackenzie was in fact a [illegible]rably dry-headed Scottish man of business. *The Man of [illegible] World* (1773) is a pendant, and the hero is a cynical transgressor. *Julia de Roubigné* (1777), in epistolary form, establishes Mackenzie's connection with the anti-slavery movement of his time. He was the first to greet, in somewhat patronising terms, the genius of Burns, in his *Lounger*, a magazine produced in Edinburgh (1785-7), a sequel to the earlier *Mirror*. Mackenzie edited these periodicals and wrote much in them, and is one of the latest of the pupils who worked in the studio of Addison. He had cultivated tastes, and Scott records his lecture on German literature, given in 1788, as one of the first incitements to a study that was still most uncommon. Another little tale by an unknown hand, and faintly imitative of Sterne, is *The Correspondents* (1775), also cast into the form of letters. Not without nicety, the relationship is developed between a wretched old dangler of rank and a young widow, who chooses him as her mentor. With inimitable prudery and sensibility, she keeps him at arm's length, angling (so we think) for an offer of marriage which never comes; and on the last page, after some critical remarks on the letters of 'Junius,' she

signs herself, in gently spiteful italics, 'your affectionate friend.' Sterne's trick of doubling away and breaking off just before a crisis is followed with some address.

But not thus was the novel to be kept alive. In *Evelina*, the gay photographic comedy of the male novelists assumes a feminine sharpness and lightness of touch. Miss Burney,[1] though more decorous than they, is far from prim, and what in Smollett would have been an unnatural reserve is in her only an engaging boldness. She was admired by some of the strongest minds of the time, including Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, as well as by their descendant Macaulay. They relished her sketches of real life, as they did those of Crabbe; they liked the written talk of a woman of wit and breeding, not too much given to sentiment. They admired the fine handiwork, which they could no more imitate than they could make lace. Fanny Burney is, in essence, less a novelist than a reporter, or an ideal maker of memoirs. Her fictitious dialogues have the same air of veracity, of line-by-line reproduction, as her record of her talks with royalty or with the unspeakable old court dame, Schwellenberg. In *Evelina* she keeps to the epistolary convention, for the heroine tells her whole tale to her adviser, Mr. Villars, in writing. The drawbacks of the method are clear, but at least it gives the sense of the present; we have the false lights and half-lights, in which events are seen as they occur, instead of the notion that the omniscient author is buttoning up the secret. Miss Burney's strength hardly lies in plot, though she gets over its necessities gracefully enough. But her sense of type, her gaiety and economy of stroke, and her intuition of manners, especially of bad manners, had no precedent in English fiction. Madame Duval with her French, and Captain Mirvan with his dressed monkey, and the crowd of matrons, beauties and fops, are still alive. They rescue for us the vision of a world that was soon to perish. The Bath of *Humphry Clinker*, of *Evelina*, of Anstey's *New Bath Guide*, and of *Persuasion*, has a different array of humours and ceremonies in each case.

Miss Burney's powers grew, but not in full harmony; for *Cecilia* (1782), as Macaulay has shown, begins to suffer from an unnatural weight of diction, due to Johnson's infection: and this spoils and lengthens out many of the impassioned scenes, which become too polite and elaborate. The language of a man, even of a young man, making love must have been simpler than that of Mr. Delvile. But in this convention Miss Burney was of her age, and Scott is equally at fault in the

same way. The light comedy, also, is seen hardening into the exhibition of humours; and herein *Cecilia* stands to *Evelina* somewhat as Ben Jonson's second comedy stands to his first: there is more mind in the work, but less nature. Yet the story is wonderfully well built up and carried through; the spring of Cecilia's troubles—the refusal of caste-proud aristocrats to let their son change his name in order to marry her, while she must marry if she is to keep her fortune—is not at all improbable; and the villainy of Monckton is most plausibly kept from Cecilia, while the reader is aware of it. In the throng of humourists, too, there is still rich and delightful comedy. Briggs and Simkin and Hobson are extravagant, but only as the best creations of Dickens are extravagant The passages of arms between the elder Delvile, a sort of Sir Leicester Dedlock in his grotesque ancestral pride, and Lady Honoria Pemberton, a perfectly lifelike piece of giddy mischief, are in the best style of comedy.

'I believe, indeed, a person of family such as mine will hardly be supposed to have come into the world for the office of amusing it!'

'O, no, sir,' cried she, with pretended innocence; 'nobody, I am sure, ever saw you with such a thought.'

But he had come into the world for just that office, as the sequel shows:

'Caps and wigs, dinners and bouquets!' interrupted Mr. Delvile; 'your ladyship's estimate of wealth is really extremely minute.'

'Why, you know, sir, as to caps and wigs, they are very serious things, for we should look mighty droll figures to go about bare-headed; and as to dinners, how would the Delviles have lasted all these thousand centuries if they had disdained eating them?'

Passion may be formal in Miss Burney's dialogue, but her humour is outspoken enough. With little of Jane Austen's still irony, her touch upon fatuity and vulgarity, in the reported speech of the Branghtons or of Mr. Briggs, is more startling, and may be called more masculine. She had mixed more with loud men than the observer of Chawton, and fiction is well on its way to the still robuster style of Miss Ferrier. But one gift all these ladies have, which is denied to the male novelist and works on the nerves even of the admiring male reader. They can pile up small cruel vexations and comic embarrassments on the heroine till she does not know where to look, and this screw they turn without mercy; or rather they torture their victim to death with needles, till we hate

and weary of the sight and wish to think that this chill, small inhumanity of the authoress towards her puppets, is not a secondary sexual characteristic. Poor Miss Burney was to suffer something of the sort herself; her vice-like memory records it all in her *Diary*, and is seen even in *Camilla* (1796).

Mrs. Charlotte Smith, whose sonnets have been named already, was in her day more noted for her work in fiction. She translated *Manon Lescaut*, and *The Old Manor House* (1793) was the most popular of her novels. It is a not incongruous or ungraceful mixture of the story of manners and the story of suspense; there are strange faces, and alarming sounds, and an agitated heroine; but there is some naturalness and ease in the dialogue. These old once-fashionable stories are now thin and pale, but the fortunes of Mrs. Smith's Orlando and Monimia, and the humours of the coachmen and old ladies who surround them, are at least recited without rhetoric.

The edifying tale of real life, as composed in the eighteenth century, has long been obsolete, but has most respectable origins. They lie far away, in the Morality, with its personified virtues and vices; in the comedy of Jonson and Massinger; in the formal Character, and in its offspring, the typical portraits, more or less conventionalised, of Addison and Steele. Thence the tradition was taken over by artists so different, yet so close allied, as Fielding and Hogarth. Fielding's genius, of course, eludes any such formula; but his mechanism is simple enough in one sense; the wicked flourish long, the decent are tried and buffeted, but some poetic justice—the justice, that is, proper to comedy, is done at last. In Hogarth (and in his contemporary, Lillo, the dramatist, who stands outside literature knocking at the door), the further conception of the Progress is developed. The lives of the good boy and the bad are next exhibited, in neatly parallel phases, the one destined for the mayoral robes and the other for the hangman's toilet. In Hogarth the pedagogic element is most powerful; but we can swallow it, because it is commended by his magnificent energy of invective, by the truth and greatness of his execution, and also by his recurrent sense of beauty. But the same element becomes more dubious as the novel falls into the hands, or aprons, of the women, and takes on the character of sampler-work. Story-telling, while seasoned with more or less of wit and observation, becomes a means of preaching the reader into virtue and good sense. Fiction becomes a spinster, or elderly wedded relation, of *The Alchemist* and *The Spectator*. The habit of setting villainy over against

goodness, or sensibility against sense, becomes the frame of mind of the novelist, the very form of her thought. She starts, not with persons, but with these abstractions, whom she tries, and sometimes certainly contrives, to create into persons. Fiction thus shades off into educational writing,[1] which at this period mostly lies outside literature. To understand fully the atmosphere of the novel, it would be right to spend some time with the 'blue-stocking' and cultured dames of the period —Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Chapone, and the rest—for whom our chronicle has no leisure, and with male instructors like the essayist Dr. John Gregory.

III

This element of schoolroom ethics, oddly mixed with something much more daring, and with not a little vigour of observant wit, is found in the two novels (praised by Byron)[2] of Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821). Her own life is a better story than either. She was beautiful and stage-struck; married young and abruptly, though happily; but was, after seven years, left a widow; played many first-rate parts—Lady Anne, Cordelia, Desdemona—chiefly in the provinces, with much intelligence, but was hampered by a defect of speech; was often in straits and always generous; and her prudence, her charm, her attraction, are described by many observers, including Mary Shelley. Mrs. Inchbald edited several collections of plays, and herself wrote or adapted nearly a score of pieces; but her repute rests on *A Simple Story* (1791) and *Nature and Art* (1796), which were at once successful.

In *A Simple Story* there is much good breakfast-table comedy, and no lack of 'passion,' rather of the genteel sort. There is also some sharp and almost subtle sketching of character. The persons are two old maids, two priests, a young peer, and a young flirt. This Miss Milner is the ward of one of the priests, named Dorriforth. She commands our sympathy with her sprightly ways, though the authoress is shocked at her bearing. She and her guardian are in love, but both are silent for fear of sacrilege. A real subject seems here to be in sight, but it is evaded; for Rome dispenses Dorriforth (now an earl) from his vows, that a noble Catholic race may not perish. He becomes betrothed to Miss Milner, and administers to her the most terrific lectures when she goes to a masquerade in male attire. Still, they marry. Years pass; we then learn that Lady Elmwood has played false, of course with a nobleman; but she dies. So Elmwood turns

Timon, refuses even to see his daughter Matilda, who lives in his house, and only relents when he is called upon to save her from a ruffian ravisher—also a nobleman. Matilda has been brought up well, and *therefore* ends well, but her poor mother had gone wrong through missing the effects of 'proper education'; with which words, printed in capitals, the book concludes. The liveliest passages are those between the two priests, Dorriforth with his irksome conscience, and Sandford, the very insolent but unkicked director of that conscience, a cleric who 'perfectly knew how to influence the sentiments and sensations of all humankind,' and who is therefore a parlour version of the lowering Jesuits that meet us in the pages of Mrs. Radcliffe and Maturin.

Nature and Art, though also tolerably ridiculous in detail, is by no means dull or conventional in its moral. The tale occupies two generations. William and Henry are the bad and good brothers. William is ambitious, callous, and conventional: he becomes a dean. Henry is good and kind, launches the ungrateful William in life, but marries a public singer whom the dean's aristocratic lady declines to receive. Mrs. Henry dying, the dean reflects that 'had he known she had been so near her dissolution, she might have been introduced to Lady Clementina'—a phrase that gives us the length of Mrs. Inchbald's stiletto. Time goes by, and Henry, who has lived by playing the violin to the natives of Africa, sends back his son, Henry the younger, to his uncle's care. This Henry is a Rousseau-bred child, and asks the dean such awkward questions as 'what is the difference between a war and a massacre,' and why, if there are no ranks in heaven, there are any upon earth. William the younger, the dean's son, is a successful and competent villain. He seduces a girl, saddles his cousin with the crime, and rises (we must get over this as best we may) to be a judge. His victim turns thief to support her child, and after many years is brought up for sentence—before William. He does not recognise her; he condemns her to be hanged, and hanged she is. Her letters reach him afterwards. In the management of this climax, however absurdly it is led up to, there is real power and suspense. The judgment-scene is impressive, and the letters have a pathos—neither overstrung, nor yet, what would be worse, understrung and childish—which is rare in the fiction of the time. Henry, of course, prospers in the end. But at least there is no reliance on the glaring, overt, poetical justice of Hogarth or of Lillo. The villain is not hanged[1] himself, but hangs an innocent, whose

death lies at his door. It is perhaps the best praise of Mrs. Inchbald that she contrives to make us forget the probabilities.

Imagine Sir Charles Grandison brought up on a diet of the *Contrat Social*, and we shall have some conception of the hero of Robert Bage's novel, *Hermsprong, or Man as he is Not*[1] (1796)—a title that is only too accurate. Hermsprong is not, like Fielding's Square or Thwackum, a man of one idea, who is carnal in the intervals of philosophical discussion, but an idea in man's clothing, who courts real women, knocks down, with an irresistible fist, wicked and aggressive persons of quality, and discourses of an ideal community and its virtues. He has learnt his doctrines in America, but his Utopia is something not to be found, we learn, 'even in America'; it is one in which 'all the members had the power so to alternate the employments of the mind and body, that the operations of each might be enjoyment.' Hermsprong carries the atmosphere of Price and Paine into all companies, and one fragment of dialogue, containing an often-quoted phrase, gives his view of the rights of women:

'Now, the devil take me,' said Sumelin, 'if I know what either you or this Mrs. Wollstonecraft would be at. But this I know, that the influence of women is too great; that it has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.'

'Well, then,' Mr. Hermsprong answered, 'let it be diminished on the side of—charms; and let its future increase be on the side of mind.'

'To what purposes?' the banker asked. 'To invade the provinces of men?'

When he is off this track of thought, Bage has a curious rollicking tone; he had been brought up a quaker. The plot of his story is beneath description, and his heroine correct beyond endurance; but her confidant, Miss Fluart, is a brilliantly-sketched little flirt, amazingly free-spoken and on the right side, and capable of keeping in order old Lord Grondale, who is a variation, with sundry satyr-like qualities added, of Miss Burney's Delvile; a person with a mad conceit of his rank, and a domestic tyrant. There is a good deal of comedy in *Hermsprong*; but the better it is, the more it is spoilt by the ingredient of doctrine. Bage's other novels, such as *Man as he Is* (1792), which was enjoyed by Cowper, and *Mount Henneth*, show the same mixture in less readable form.

The *Memoirs* of Thomas Holcroft[2] (1745-1809), the playwright, actor, traveller and radical, relate with admirable

vigour, and in manly style, his wandering life ; they were completed by Hazlitt and published in 1816. Holcroft's connection with the Society for Constitutional Information, and with Thelwall, Horne Tooke, and other revolutionary spirits, cost him an indictment. He figured in the famous case of 1794, but was discharged without a trial. His *Road to Ruin*, the best of his melodramatic comedies, appeared in 1792, and is named hereafter (Ch. XXI). He has an ingrained weakness for theorising, but his stories give a lively picture of manners and opinions, and often of his own career. *Alwyn* (1780) describes the life of a wandering player like himself. In *Anna St. Ives* (1792, 7 vols.) the hero is the son of a gardener, and his merits, we hear, 'almost exceed expression.' He puts the arrogant gentry in the wrong at every turn, by sheer greatness of soul. He stops a duel between two complete strangers by his lofty remonstrances. His foil is a feeble sort of Lovelace, who is at last shamed into virtue by his example. 'I pardon you, sir,' says the hero, 'and leave you to pardon yourself.' We see this gentleman through the eyes of the heroine, who writes most of the letters that compose the story. He might be described, in sporting phrase, as 'by Grandison out of Doctrine.' *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* (1794) is a work worthier of the author of the *Road to Ruin*. Sometimes it is as quick and vivid as *Roderick Random*. The hero's childhood, schooling, university life, and experience in journalism, are told with the same hard, high spirits ; and long political ruminations, of a radical cast, are interspersed. The cursing, gambling, and raking of the Oxford boys, and the revenge of the squire on the obnoxious parson, whose tithe he pays in the shape of a horde of rats, are episodes lively enough. There are two things in *Hugh Trevor* especially worthy of remembrance. One is the radical but jovial, the jovial but melancholy ditty, of *Gaffer Gray*, and the other is the clergyman who put an amazing quantity of emphasis on his 'epithet, *Prodigious*.' Scott's kindly notice of Holcroft, whose opinions he abhorred, is such as we should expect, and the 'epithet' may have stuck in his memory. In another story, *The Memoirs of Bryan Perdue* (1805), Holcroft laments what law has made of man, and muses on the bright examples that Jack Sheppard and Eugene Aram would have furnished, if only they had had the chance.

The dramatist Richard Cumberland, in his novel *Henry* (1795), presents another hero of the same breed as those of Bage and Holcroft ; and there is the same awkward compound of theory and horse-play. The plot is assiduously arranged

in the manner of Fielding, with books and prefaces, and Cumberland gives a late edition of the classical canons of the art of fiction :

> A Novel may be considered as a kind of dilated comedy ; its plot, therefore, should be uniform, and its narrative unbroken ; episodes and digressions are sparingly, if at all, to be admitted. . . . Every writer, who wishes to endear man to man by pleasing pictures of human nature, will let the good preponderate over the evil ; he will not take his maxims from Rochefoucault, nor shape his fellow-creatures after the models of Hobbes or Swift.

It is unlucky that these honest prescriptions fail to impart life to *Henry*. As Scott observes, Cumberland must have been too acute to mistake the purpose of Fielding's first novel ; but he makes his hero a kind of Joseph Andrews, who resists the most trying assaults on his virtue ; and, like other followers of Fielding who lacked insight, he falls back upon Smollettesque humours and noise. We return without regret from Cumberland to the women novelists, in whose hands virtue is safer because more vivacious.

In the tales of Mrs. Opie[1] (1769-1853), the wife of the painter, there is a piquant outlook on the world of human disturbance from beneath the shelter of the quaker bonnet. The daughter of Dr. James Alderson of Norwich—the cultured, liberal-minded Norwich of the Taylors and Gurneys—she knew Godwin and the radical set, as well as Mrs. Siddons and Kemble. She travelled freely, and saw Napoleon, Kosciusko, and Louis Philippe ; talked with Scott, Erskine, Fox, and Dr. Chalmers ; kept to the last her habit of sitting in the civil courts, in order to study eloquence and the human drama ; and remained full of jest and repartee and sprightliness. She was a moral and religious woman of the world, and believed, like her companions, in the power of direct ethical instruction upon the character of the young ; a belief which, along with its artistic parasites, the scheme of the 'progress,' and the framework of the moral contrast, determined much of her attitude as a novelist. She passed easily and gradually away from the advanced views of her youth ; and when, in 1825, she joined the Society of Friends, she had done most of her story-telling ; her *Detraction Displayed*, and her *Art of Lying in all its Branches*, being not tales but discourses.

Mrs. Opie's tales are now little read, and have been undervalued. Most of them are brief, though *Adeline Mowbray* (1804) is a full-length novel. Her first signed work, *Father and*

Daughter (1810), is all pain and pathos. In other cases she essays the novel of sensation, as in *A Tale of Trials* and in *The Ruffian Boy*; the latter of which shows a certain kinship with Mrs. Radcliffe. The 'ruffian' is an Italian, who swears vengeance against a damsel who has slighted him, and chases her through some two hundred pages, being detected in various guises by his *eyes*. This is the pair of terrible eyes that now begins to haunt English fiction; they are seen in *Vathek* and *The Monk*, and they descend through Byron's poems to the villains of Bulwer Lytton and Dickens. Their original ancestry is perhaps found in the 'baleful eyes' of Milton's Satan. Mrs. Opie has thus a stronger dash of romance than Miss Edgeworth or Miss Austen; but the best of her works are lacking in this element. Her *Simple Tales*, *Tales of Real Life*, *New Tales*, and *Tales of the Heart*, appeared at intervals from 1806 to 1820.

Mrs. Opie is most herself when she is working out the embroilments caused by some minor vice or foible, in a witty moral tract. Her knowledge of the world is generally sufficient to make her narrative water-tight, and she excels in the slightly formal dialogue of persons of quality, ironically presented. In *Lady Anne and Lady Jane* she does her work only too well, for she enlists our sympathy with the flighty, secretive, prodigal Lady Jane, who ruins her husband, and at last dies wretchedly, stabbed by the wife of a poor creditor whom her refusals to pay have driven to suicide. Lady Anne, brusque, dignified, noble, and severely restraining her liking for the husband of Lady Jane, is less engaging, despite the careful austerity with which her failings are exhibited. Another anecdote, *White Lies*, has an unpromising title, and the schoolroom is at once suggested by the contrast of the good sister, Clara, who is bursting with sincerity and informs a strange gentleman that he certainly looks very 'yellow,' with the 'white liar,' her sister Eleanor. But the actual intricate little plot, wherein Eleanor's lies nearly cause the dismissal of a worthy tutor, and at last cause her to be subpœnaed by both parties in a lawsuit, is most deftly contrived. Eleanor never reforms; her word is always doubted by her husband, 'a nobleman many years older than herself.'

One of the most arresting of these stories is *A Wife's Duty*; it has no plot, but is the record of a life. Helen Pendarves, the wife, is Mrs. Opie's masterpiece. Her unaltering love for her volatile though not ill-natured husband (who is led away by a wicked ex-actress); her moments of feminine pleasure in her rival's reverses, and her slow sad measurements of her

own fading beauty, are all drawn with a craft that faintly suggests that of Thackeray. All the parties find themselves in Paris during the Terror, and Helen, in disguise, lodges in a baker's shop frequented by Robespierre, Danton, and Anacharsis Clootz. Pendarves dies, and Helen then marries an old admirer and is happy ; that is all. Mrs. Opie lets herself go in her portraits of rakish fine gentlemen and ladies ; and one of them, the bitter-tongued Sir Charles Delmour, is a highly natural figure. He shows himself a true friend to the virtuous wife, when she takes his addresses in a right and humorous spirit. The copybook element is happily in abeyance in *A Wife's Duty*, and the way in which the shadows lift repeatedly, only to fall again, while to the last the issue is unforeseen, is lifelike enough. Once, in *The Welcome Home*, Mrs. Opie betrays her knowledge of the danger besetting her art ; and the fading of her vogue, once considerable, may be explained by her confession. The elderly hero marries the plain friend of his youth, whom he has found faithful after many years, and the authoress exclaims :

> Alas, I fear I am painting a very unnatural character for a general officer just returned a rich and prosperous bachelor from India ! But I must have my own way ; and paint such a man as he ought to think and feel, not perhaps as he would.

Cheerful prudence, which teaches that good sense and good feeling always succeed, while thriftlessness and selfishness are never lucky long—what is the fruit of such a doctrine when it is sown in Irish soil, with the sun and dew upon it of Irish wit and pathos ? The answer is found in the stories of Maria Edgeworth [1] (1767-1849). She was the pupil and at first the literary partner of her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, whose autobiography [2] is a precious document for its mixture of humour, mental courage, and pedantry, and also for its notices of the life and character of Edgeworth's friend, Thomas Day, presently to be named. Father and daughter wrote together *Practical Education* (1798), a series of ingenious essays, which is of some interest in the history of the domestic application of Rousseau's theories ; and as Edgeworth had from first to last a family of nineteen, he had a right to offer such counsels. This band of brothers and sisters was a good quarry for Miss Edgeworth. She came to know many layers of Irish society. She understood the tragi-comedy of leases, rents, borrowing ; the humours of the country house, and of Dublin routs, as well as the struggles and personages of cottage

life. These she describes with something of the precision of the historian, and Scott's tributes[1] to her labours, as a kind of model for his own, were not merely due to generosity.

Miss Edgeworth's impulse to preach, or to laugh men into good behaviour, is, like Addison's, inseparable from the gift of cunning observation. She had too much of this gift merely to divide mankind into sheep and goats; and though, in nearly all her stories, there are representatives of each extreme—the good and the rascally land-agent, the thoughtful and the feather-headed child, the raffish and the steady governess—her real strength lies in the multitude of midway characters, who are, indeed, more or less definitely scheduled to the debit or credit of the universe, but are full of humour, life, and nature nevertheless. She was in print sooner than Miss Austen, long outlived her, and published three times as much, but just fell short of producing any single classic. Her works are of two kinds, the longer and the shorter story, the latter being more expressly instructive in tone, and generally aiming at the improvement of the young. Of this kind are the *Moral Tales for Young People* (1801), and *Popular Tales* (1804). These little works, and with them the familiar *Rosamond*, *Frank*, and *Harry and Lucy*, seem to challenge criticism as to their morality, which indeed is often inferior to their skill. The world is a big schoolroom, and the mistress often away. The naughty for a time have the advantage over the good, or the faults of the good get them into trouble. The mistress always comes back just in time, and gives some little shove to circumstance which sets things right. The good, now chastised and enlightened, come into their own; the others are humbled or dismissed, but without bloodshed or ruin. A happy marriage and a good conscience are, as it were, ingredients of well-earned comfort. It is easy to see the primness of these ethics; but after all, the scene is a comic one, and an 'unjust' ending would shock the feelings of the audience. As Hegel says, a gloomy finish is only warrantable when high tragedy is in question; otherwise, it is merely wasteful. These remarks apply in some degree to Miss Edgeworth's ampler works, in which the characters are adult.

The earliest of them, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), reveals her larger purpose; it is to paint a portion of the Irish people as they really were, for the enlightenment of English readers. A portion only; for the later and sterner tones of the Banims or of Carleton are not in question at all. There is no passion or bitterness, but, instead, a not undignified humorous melan-

choly, tenderness, and liveliness. The speaker in *Castle Rackrent*, Thady Quirk the steward, who was drawn from life, gives the oral memoirs of his landed and beggared masters with a sad and steady veracity, shot across with jesting. In *The Absentee*, which is one of the second series of *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809 and 1812), there is a more poetic strain. The absentee, Lord Clonbrony, has left his estate in the hands of agents, and his heir, Lord Colambre, comes in disguise to inspect, and receives the simple and beautiful hospitality of the tenants. The high-stepping, embarrassed Clonbrony, and his lady, who affects the English pronunciation and so exposes herself to the darts of the stony English dames, are types new in literature. In some of Miss Edgeworth's other Irish scenes, such as *Ennui* and *Manœuvring*, there are also genial and spirited pictures, but the threat of pedagogy is not so well veiled. *Belinda* (1801) is more of a regularly-built novel, with a strain of improbable romance. Belinda herself is the good child of the story-books, who has shot up and 'come out'—the creation of an authoress who began with Rousseau and sensibility, and has ended with a rather trying ideal of good sense. One of the ladies observes:

> 'For my part, I own I should like to be a strong devil rather than a weak angel.'
>
> 'You forget,' said Belinda, 'that it is not Milton, but Satan, who says, "Fallen spirit, to be weak," etc.'

Blake's comments on this passage would have been worth hearing; it is ineffable, and is doubtless meant as an antidote to the 'satanic' ideal. After reading it, we agree with Mr. Vincent, who 'drove toward London . . . thinking that if Belinda had more faults she would be more amiable.' It may be thought that Miss Edgeworth agreed with Belinda in her attitude to Satan. It also gives a clue to her attitude, to find that one of her young men (in *Ormond*) is led away by reading *Tom Jones*, but recovers after studying the character of Grandison, whom he finds first absurd and then impressive. Her other long stories, *Patronage* (1814), and *Harrington*, and *Ormond* (1817), show the same preoccupations and qualities. The former, her longest book, relates the troubles and final good fortune of a virtuous family who scorn to rise through political patronage, while the toad-eating place-hunters come to grief; the latter is an Irish story, full of subtlety and surprises in its characterisation. Humour, in Miss Edgeworth's books, is never far off; lucidity and vivacity are everywhere,

only interrupted by the didactic strain, and sometimes not marred even by its presence. Considerable as her craft is, her national service is greater, and her discovery of a new field of fiction perhaps greater still. To this witness is borne not only by Scott; Tourgéniev,[1] it is stated, said that he was an 'unconscious disciple of Miss Edgeworth is setting out on his literary career,' and that but for her delineation of the squires of Longford, he might not have thought of describing the parallel class in Russia.

To be armed against the prejudices of the world, and to distinguish real merit from the splendid vices which pass current in what is called society, is one of the most difficult of human sciences.

It is Mr. Barlow who is speaking; but the voice and the spirit are those of his creator, Thomas Day, whose *History of Sandford and Merton* (1783-9) is a most representative document of the new spirit of pedagogy between Rousseau and the Revolution. In the world Day depicts there is no need of a Revolution; it is not a good world; it is cruel, snobbish, prejudiced, uninformed; but it is to be taught and argued out of these vices. Reason must win, and 'a rational moderation' will prevail; and the boyish mind is as clay in the hand of the instructor. He will tell his pupil to be kind to children and animals, to make no difference between white man and coloured, to apologise for temper, to be dutiful and fraternal. These things are not only noble, but profitable. Kindness pays, as in the classic instance of Androcles; it wins gratitude, and gratitude pays too in the long run. Spleen, intolerance, and selfishness do not. With this comic kind of worldliness mingles a finer strain, though the form it takes may be grotesque. In *Sandford and Merton*, as in Day's *Dying Negro* and other verses, there is a breath of real humanity and courage. He draws out his 'history' with some skill; he interweaves stories which provoke questions, and the questions draw out explanations and more stories. His own life is the most edifying story of all. Day, in his first ardour for the programme of Rousseau, adopted and reared two foundling girls, by hand, and on principle; deferring his choice of a wife until he could judge which of them would best serve. Neither came up to his ideal, and Day married elsewhere. He was killed by the horse which he was riding, and which, from motives of humanity, he had declined to have broken in.

But this want of humour is by no means a feature of all the moralists of the age. Miss Hannah More[2] (1745-1833), whose

name must here be duly saluted, although she barely touches the chronicle of fiction, or indeed (despite her voluminous production) of letters, had no little wit and sprightliness, and fully perceived their value to the educational arsenal. She by no means falls among the radical doctrinaires, but gave much of her time to warring against them with their own weapons, and enforcing a high-minded, prim, old-fashioned, not ungainly Toryism against Tom Paine and all subverters of society. She knew and was esteemed by Garrick, Walpole, Johnson, and Burke, and lived into the next era. She turned out quite lively fugitive verse, such as *The Bas Bleu*; *Strictures on Female Education* (1799), inculcating the acquirement of solid household qualities rather than showy accomplishment; dialogues, full of animation, in the popular style, one of which, *Village Politics, by Will Chip*, an anti-Paine production, is good reading, 'many hundred thousand copies,' as she tells us, 'being circulated in a short time'; and moral tracts innumerable; besides sundry tragedies (one of which, *Percy*, was played by Garrick) and *Sacred Dramas*, which need not be described. Hannah More's most popular work, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), which ran through sixteen editions in as many years, is a novel without a story, or rather a series of social sketches and aphorisms in the guise of a novel. The hero, a prig not without brains, reviews a whole regiment of damsels, in 'search' of one who will rise to the ideal commended to him by his departed parents. There is a piquant mixture of observation and satire with mere droning and disquisition. Had Hannah More been able to think of literature as an end, and not as a means, we always feel that she might have made something of it; but then she would not have been herself; and she found her bourne in an old age of charitable and admirable deeds, labouring to better the estate of the children in the Mendips. She kept to the end her amiability and gaiety, of the cast so often found in very good people who have known the world.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton[1] is a forerunner of Galt and the chroniclers of Scottish country manners; her story, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808), is said to have left many a family the trimmer for its teachings, and it was highly and justly praised by Scott. The writer is a northern sister of Mrs. Opie and her company, writing with an innocent and avowed moral purpose; but she draws her personages sharply, and from an even humbler social layer than Miss Edgeworth. She was a learned lady of letters with a ruling interest in educa-

tional theory. Her *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), with its demure irony, mock-Eastern floweriness and young-ladyish doctrine, comes in the lineage between *The Citizen of the World* and *Hajjî Baba*: a kind of true eighteenth-century mintage, going back to *Lettres Persanes*. Her Rajah turns mild eyes of admiration and bewilderment upon English institutions and society; upon war, and horse-racing, and routs, and stupid modish conversation, and the novel of sensibility, and the revolutionary sceptic. He is struck by the Christian sacred books, but sees much in English life that they do not appear expressly to authorise. He finds that the sacred animal of the country is not the cow but the partridge, and that a poacher is nevertheless not punished with death. Mrs. Hamilton's *Popular Essays* and other treatises are less lively, but are of interest to the historian of educational opinion. Her moral novelette teaches the virtues of order, and above all of cleanliness, in village life; and her lively pictures of the fetid unscoured dwelling, with its grimy panes that will not open, its dunghill, and its promiscuous cooking utensils, and of the rustics who think nevertheless that all is 'weel eneugh,' are of a fidelity that goes near to affect the stomach. Her brisk use of the vernacular contrasts, as might be expected, with the studied English of her sermons and admonitions. She is brought up on Locke and benevolence and good sense, but admires Rousseau and scenery and simple living; and her undoubted share of observing faculty is smothered only too much in doctrine. Mrs. Hamilton is early in the field amongst the lesser Scottish novelists, who will be noticed hereafter (Ch. XII.).

IV

But the novel of manners had long waited for its mistress. Narrative and portraiture, talk and style, had yet to reach perfection and to interpenetrate, in the pure service of art. The ailment of preaching, with its symptom, the fondness for abstract personages, had struck deep. No classic manner had been attained. No woman, in particular, had written who was content with what she could really do, for some had meddled with passions, others with theories, others with diction, that were too much for them. But the missing harmony of gifts is found in Jane Austen[1] (1775-1817). She does not mar them, for she knows what to sacrifice. All that Bentham or Cobbett saw in England, she leaves out of view. For her

there existed no French Revolution, no public abuses, no history. She ignores all ranks above that of the baronet, or solid rich landlord (Cobbett's 'fundlord'), and below the lowest middle class;[1] seldom draws servants, being too much of a lady to have the backstair consciousness that troubles Thackeray; avoids country folk; and never admits an artist or man of letters into her pages. Her scene is no larger than her own experience: the rectory, the country mansion, the small town, the professional circle, with rare sallies to Bath or Portsmouth or Lyme—these are the boundaries of her life and art. 'Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work upon.' The lieutenants and admirals, who bring in a breath of foreign air, are such as she had known at home; they are the winged ants who fly abroad and then back to the nest. She was not a shy recluse, but had no clear business in the world except that of a good-looking, sociable, maiden aunt who was liked by every one and who wrote tales which for a long while nobody would publish. If we come back to her after the Brontës, she may seem to leave out the chief things in life. So she seemed to Charlotte Brontë.[2] But she is not so to be approached. Drop romance, shut *Wuthering Heights* or *Villette*, go into Miss Austen's world, and her power of selection is so sure that we forget there is any other, just as the people in her books forget it. Her furniture of belief and custom was that of a million spinsters, but she had the surest of artistic consciences, the gift of style and story-telling, and a native power of ironical miniature. She died at forty-two, leaving six novels, some fragments, and a number of domestic letters. The nature of her craft is defined, when she speaks of 'the little bit of ivory (two inches wide) on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour.' But it produces a great effect, and outlives most of the big ambitious pictures. To have given birth to Jane Austen is one of the best things done for England by the society she describes.

Her first three books were written at Steventon between 1796 and 1799; but *Pride and Prejudice* was not published till 1812, *Sense and Sensibility* preceding it in 1811, and *Northanger Abbey* following in 1818. The second three were written at Chawton, another Hampshire village, between 1811 and 1816: *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814, *Emma* in 1816, *Persuasion* posthumously. These show a deeper skill and humanity than the Steventon novels, but no essential change in style or method. The mature finality of form and temper

in *Pride and Prejudice*—if it was not greatly revised before printing—is one of the mysteries of letters, for Jane Austen wrote it at twenty-two, while *Pamela* was written at fifty and *Joseph Andrews* at thirty-five. The verses of Chatterton are in this way not more remarkable. The young are full of satire, but their pictures of life seldom bear looking into; and if they have the power of expression, their power of thought lags behind it. In Jane Austen all three gifts are shown at once and for good. Such a fact may be partly explained by that avoidance, already noted, of tragical or vehement matter which saves her from false experiments; but this very avoidance shows the precocity of her artistic instinct.

Sense and Sensibility was the first tale she published, and, though written in its present form after *Pride and Prejudice*, it was founded on an earlier draft, *Elinor and Marianne*, of which it surely bears the traces. It is built on an Edgeworthian 'contrast,' and touched with a governessing tone to which Jane Austen seldom returned. Nor is the contrast sound: it is a little sermon against poetry, romance, and unreasoned love. These things are rebuked in the 'sensibility' of Marianne Dashwood, who is humbled and schooled, and submits devotedly at last to a dull marriage. The cool, well-ordered 'sense' of Elinor is dreary enough. To drive home the text, both sisters are tried and deceived or humiliated by various selfish, callow, gross, or fickle persons: and in the drawing of these Jane Austen reveals her craft, with a sourness as yet somewhat unrelieved. The tune is set by the opening scene of raking small comedy, where Mrs. John Dashwood reasons her husband out of keeping his promise to look after his orphaned half-sisters; and Mrs. Jennings, the two Miss Steeles, and the Palmers, ring all the changes, and mark every transitional stage, between cheery vulgarity and frigid meanness. Miss Austen lived in fancy with her characters, and would impart to her friends some facts about them not related in her books. She told her family that Miss Steele never managed to 'catch the Doctor,' and that the amount given by the sparing Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park* for the expenses of a relative was 'one pound.'

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the ideals of cool sense are no longer personified; indeed, in the priggish Mary Bennet, who 'piqued herself upon the solidity of her reflections,' they are half-parodied. The book is built, not on the opposition of two embodied principles, a right and a wrong, but on the clash

of two opposing foibles, which have to be softened before the persons led astray by them can come together. Darcy is possessed by family pride, and Elizabeth Bennet by the prejudice that he is all pride. The title originally intended was *First Impressions*. Darcy turns out to be reticent and generous, but the reader is almost as slow in discovering these qualities as Elizabeth herself. For Darcy is, in fact, at first something of a caricature or dressed-up idiosyncrasy, like a person in Jonson's comedies; and then he becomes a human being. Or it may be fairer to say that his character changes, and is not merely revealed, during the story. The train of events is somewhat intricately but most logically adjusted to ensure the better acquaintance of Elizabeth and Darcy, and their happiness; and a crowd of personages in the second plane is created, whose absorbed dealings with one another operate to this end, and who are also chosen to serve as foils, in various subtle ways, to the hero and heroine. One of them, Jane Bennet, the elder sister, must have been harder to draw than the sharp-witted, likeable Elizabeth, who misjudges others so youthfully and naturally. Jane, good-looking and steady-natured, has just that touch of obstinate kindness which refuses to believe till the last moment that a rogue is indeed a rogue, and even then is content to think him a self-deceiver. Miss Austen knows better; but she brings out the gentle fragrance and folly of such a character with much affection. Darcy, on his part, is furnished with a travesty of his own 'pride' in the person of his aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who enters just at the moment when some foil is required to make him less offensive. Lady Catherine and her famous chaplain Mr. Collins have been called extravagant, but this appearance would vanish if they figured in a play, and not in a tale of domestic humours. Their words would ring across the footlights, and Molière has just such startling personages. Mr. Collins's classic proposal to Elizabeth is not nearly so great a triumph as the letter that he writes just after the elopement of Lydia Bennet. No one in the book is wholly spared, and least of all the father of Elizabeth, Mr. Bennet, the student and superior man, the master of sarcasm, whose irony is turned against himself by the disaster of the unashamed Lydia. The unison of character, situation, and story in *Pride and Prejudice* is more wonderful the more it is examined. Though not the most humane of Miss Austen's books, it is the most boldly plotted out, and perhaps the most humorously written.

If, as Miss Austen's family held, the brief sketch called *Lady Susan* was written early, it is another proof of her quick maturity of brain. She did not print it, perhaps because the effect produced by the heroine on those about her is insufficiently explained. Lady Susan is a cynical coquette, with a gift for hard lying in a gentle voice, and no lack of courage when she is brought to bay; but it is hardly credible that she should not be found out sooner. The outline of the other characters is clear enough; of Lady Susan's brazen confidante; of her bullied daughter; of the swain who has to be 'talked, flattered, and finessed into an affection' for the daughter, by Lady Susan herself, with whom he is entangled; and of the ponderous parents who bring up the rear. The fragment called *The Watsons* is much more amiable in tone than this bitter little book, but breaks off before the drama is reached.

Northanger Abbey may be noticed later, as an epilogue to the 'novels of terror' which it parodies. There remain the three Chawton stories, written, though not all published, at an interval of years after the three early novels. *Mansfield Park* has no plot and keeps no secret long; the interest of mystery is abandoned. The old gay sharpness remains, but is refined into greater subtlety; the temper is gentler, the whole modulation finer. The humble, grateful, clear-judging, almost passive Fanny Price challenges none of the irony of which Elizabeth Bennet and Catherine Morland are the victims. She may be drawn too much to pattern, and she does not affect events; but the events all take their point and value from her connection with them. Some of her discourses with Edmund Bertram, long her only defender, and clearly her destined husband, are lengthy, and might be called the last refuge of the old periodical essay.[1] But the chief concern of the authoress is Fanny's happiness, and towards this purpose all the other personages unconsciously move and work. The scene is too well known to describe: the big, opulent country house, where Fanny is kept for charity, the daughter of a sister who has married meanly. The master, Sir Thomas Bertram, blind and heavy-handed, and full of consequence, but not unkind or unjust; his lady, engrossed in 'pug'; the flashy daughters who come to grief and vanish; Fanny's light-tongued, sprightly rival, Mary Crawford, on whom the authoress is too hard, and who for a time draws Edmund Bertram away from Fanny Price; Edmund himself, a prig who gives his confidences to the supposed sisterly sympathy of Fanny;

these, and more, fill but never overcrowd the scene, which is the most congenial one that Miss Austen ever chose. Suddenly, as if to avoid monotony, Fanny is swept off to her noisy, malodorous home at Portsmouth, which is described with a ruthlessness that reminds us of George Gissing. But the staple of the book is the intricate little comedy of the Bertram household, leaden with true English caste-complacency, into which some air is let by the coming and going of the sailor-brother and the fast young flirting men. Fanny's final and happy installation, in contrast with her first insignificance, impresses Sir Thomas Bertram himself, and forms, says the authoress,

> just such a contrast . . . as time is for ever producing between the plans and decisions of mortals, for their own instruction and their neighbours' entertainment.

Such is the keynote of this and the other Chawton stories. The didactic standpoint is there, but the 'instruction' is swathed in irony for our 'entertainment,' and is seldom pressed upon us without such disguise. And the feeling for beauty has crept in timidly; not so much for personal beauty, which is more drily recognised, but for beauty of character. Miss Austen watches over Fanny Price as over some late-flowering, disregarded herb, promising herself that it shall thrive against all odds of climate and weather. There is also an unobtrusive kind of justice. The mean, the slight, and the stagnant are only punished by remaining just what they are, whilst actual culprits are left to their natural chagrin, 'without' our 'presuming to look forward to a juster appointment hereafter' —a noiseless touch of something too delicate to be called scepticism.

In *Emma* Miss Austen reverts to the type of heroine whom, whilst loving, she effectually chastens; the story is the chastening of Emma Woodhouse. She is an 'imaginist,' who thinks she can see into the minds of others; she loves interfering and match-making, and she is not a little of a snob. On one occasion she says that she would be 'sorry to see greater pride or refinement in the teacher of a school'; and, on beholding the mansion of Mr. Knightley, she feels 'an increasing respect for it, as the residence of a family of such true gentility, untainted in blood and understanding.' But it is not this weakness that she expiates, for she becomes the mistress of the mansion. Her other errors subject her to cruel humiliations. She tries to estrange her little friend, Harriet Smith, from the young

farmer whom Harriet at last marries. She finds that the man whom she destines for Harriet is all the while adoring herself, and she has to explain. She flirts with a youth in the absence of Jane Fairfax, to whom he is secretly engaged, and confides to him injurious fancies about Jane. The slow, lengthy, microscopic analysis of all this is amazingly skilful, and may be an inheritance from Richardson, but there is a certain hard repellent prolixity about much of it. The talking old lady, Miss Bates, is a bore to the reader, though the tedium is well redeemed by the unfailing minute farce of Mr. Woodhouse's sayings. We do not tire of the man who 'would not recommend an egg boiled by any one else' than his own cook. The drawbacks of *Emma* are on the side of over-completeness. The ending is all bright and kind comedy, in which every one is made happy and talks over past mistakes. And here, as in *Persuasion*, there are unwonted touches of pleasure in natural things. One passage might serve as a motto for Miss Austen's genius in its gentler hours:

> It was a sweet view—sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive.

Persuasion shows how little, after all, Jane Austen is 'impersonal.' Her delightful favouritism, and her hatred of some of her own creatures, are evident all through. These come first upon the scene; Sir Walter Elliot, baronet of Kellynch Hall, chief amongst them, a man who is wholly made up of vanity—'vanity of person and of situation.' He recedes into the background as the tale goes on, to receive a parting lash at the conclusion. The love-affairs of Anne, his second daughter, are the subject; her gradual and imperilled recovery of an old suitor, whom she has rejected long before under mistaken advice. Her final happy marriage[1] is brought about through a hurry and maze of small incidents, all planned with untiring skill; but the attention is steadily kept upon the changing mind, the alarms, the gradual dawning hopes, the revulsions, of Anne herself. In Anne, as in Fanny Price, Miss Austen is bent on portraying her own sex from within. There is a true 'vindication of the rights of women.' Men, says Anne to Captain Harville, who is discussing the comparative constancy of the sexes,

> have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree. The pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.

So Anne's story is told for her, in half-lights, with a suppressed tenderness and a delight in doing her justice, and without any touch of scorn. When she first meets Wentworth again, 'the room seemed full of persons and voices.' She walks in Bath, musing on 'high-wrought love and eternal constancy,' and 'it was almost enough to spread perfume and purification all the way.' At last she marries her sailor, and 'the dread of a future war' was 'all that could dim her sunshine.' The tints of the surrounding scenery are just washed in, and are in keeping. Anne sits under a 'low rambling holly,' and watches 'the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges.' Miss Austen lets out her own feelings in *Persuasion* more than she does in her published letters. Her method in this book is distinctive; bold satire melts into high comedy, and this again into a pathos which closes in idyll.

V

It is not easy to see what writers Miss Austen studied for imitation or avoidance. Her biographer says that 'every circumstance narrated in *Sir Charles Grandison* was familiar to her,' and she must have learnt something from the fine chain-armourer's craft of Richardson. Miss Burney she studied, and praises not only *Cecilia* but *Camilla*. Mrs. Radcliffe she perused in a different spirit. She liked Scott's verse, but her reading of the earlier Waverley Novels was not fervent. She knew *The Corsair*, but Crabbe was nearer to her mind. Her jest that 'if ever she married at all, she could fancy being Mrs. Crabbe' is better known than her method of keeping it up:

> I have never seen the death of Mrs. Crabbe. . . . Poor woman! I will comfort him as well as I can, but I do not undertake to be good to her children . . . she had better not leave any. (1813)

In respect of style and finish she is not at all like a feminine Crabbe; she is much more like a feminine Congreve, notwithstanding her different views of decorum. Every word has its place, its value, its quintessential aptness, but, as befits a woman, the style is nearer than Congreve's to the simple and natural. Goldsmith, and before him Addison, had come between. Miss Austen's English is hardly at all antiquated; her diction and sentences would not sound strange, except for their excellence, in any book written since 1750. In *Mansfield Park* there is a sprinkling of terms that are still con-

sciously foreign ; some of them, it is true, are used by affected persons ; they include *ton, éclat, éclaircissement, tout ensemble, con amore, apropos, exigeant.* Fanny Price, too, thinks of Edmund Bertram as 'the flirt, perhaps, *of* Mrs. Rushworth' ; and Dr. Grant 'brought on apoplexy and death by three great *institutionary* dinners in one week.' In *Emma* occur 'deedily' and 'imaginist.' On the whole, there are but few obsolete words or turns in the stories.

From her correspondence we can guess something of her way of working. A young relation, Anna Austen, submits a story to her. She corrects the errors of ceremonial address in the dialogue ; resents the phrase, 'a vortex of dissipation,' as 'novel-slang' ; welcomes such a 'nonpareil' of a name as 'Newton Prior,' and adds, profanely, that 'Milton would have given his eyes for it' ; finally advising thus, in tones that no doubt echo her own self-criticisms as she worked :

> I wish you could make Mrs. Forester[1] talk more ; but she must be difficult to manage and make entertaining, because there is so much good sense and propriety about her that nothing can be made very broad. Her economy and her ambition must not be too staring.

In a like strain is her concise judgment on a popular tale, Mary Brunton's *Self-Control* (1811), which may here be adopted : 'an excellently-mannered, elegantly-written work, without any nature or probability in it.' She has not much confidence in the poets, though they have written well about the autumn. Poetry is risky, and works only on the feelings, and must not invade life too deeply, for fear of the letting in of waters. This is also the view, we know, of Plato ; but Miss Austen's standpoint is that of the 'age of reason.' So at least we may assume if, as is probable, Anne Elliot speaks for Miss Austen in her remarks to Captain Benwick, who repeats verses 'with tremulous feeling' :

> She ventured to hope that he did not always read poetry ; and to say, that she thought it was the misfortune of poetry to be seldom safely enjoyed by those who enjoyed it completely ; and that the strong feelings which alone could estimate it truly were the very feelings which ought to taste it but sparingly.

It would be absurd to say that the writer of *Persuasion* had no divination or knowledge of love ; but we must not make wrong demands upon her talent, or wonder if passion is absent from her pages. Her male characters show their feelings by attentions, by proposals, by manner, by anything except

passion. The quarrels of Darcy and Elizabeth, or of Knightley and Emma, are simply those of gentlefolk very much out of temper. Her heroines feel *something* keenly—tenderness, suspense, affection, pique ; but to Jane Austen decorum is of the soul, and is oddly united with her perfect freedom of intellectual comment. Illicit love she relegates ; the offenders in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* go out of her books, as they would have gone out of her actual world, into some kind of scandalous limbo. They show no sign of enjoying themselves ; neither are they reprehended in set form :

> Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery ; I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest.

Miss Austen excels her fellow-novelists, not because she avoids the didactic, which indeed is dear to her, but because she resolves it, after her first experiments, into her art, the art of the comedian ; just as Molière, in his larger way, does also. Her unpretending code, her celebration of self-control and clear-sightedness, are taken up into a quiet strain of comprehensive irony. Anne Elliot has a vacuous sister whose pursuits are recounted, and this is the chorus :

> Such were Elizabeth Elliot's sentiments and sensations ; such the cares to alloy, the agitations to vary, the sameness and elegance, the prosperity and the nothingness, of her scene of life.

The sentence has, for once, a Johnsonian balance. Elizabeth Elliot is herself nothing ; but she is one of thousands, and therefore draws upon herself this stately, fatal, and general description. Sometimes such people are dismissed with one twist of the bowstring, like the youth whom Miss Austen met at Bath ('Mr. B. seems nothing more than a tall young man'),[1] or like poor Richard in *Persuasion*, who

> had been nothing more than a thick-headed, unfeeling, unprofitable Dick Musgrove, who had never done anything to entitle himself to more than the abbreviation of his name, living or dead.

It takes some acidity to create a dead person in a book, merely in order thus to denounce him ; but perhaps Jane Austen had known such a youth. Other characters, babblers or gossips, silly or acrid, are allowed to talk at length, in a way that would be unbearable without the solvent of humour. A female realist without humour would make us wish to hang ourselves. As it is, Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park* is never too long, though she is very long. Humour not only keeps us pleased with our-

selves, but satisfies our reason. It finds an intelligible, if not a satisfactory, niche in the world even for Elizabeth Elliot, and sets her mean, confused train of thought so clearly before us, that we judge her to be after all not wholly beneath the making of God, any more than a small but complex insect.

These tales sometimes make us feel that there is no free will. 'We are conscious of our actions,' says Spinoza, 'but not of the causes that produce them.' Miss Austen, on her own stage, shows us those causes; the mesh is very close. It seems woven so close as to hamper movement, and we long for a sword to slash it; but there is no such sword, for the web is life, the private life of every day, with its incidents and motives. To produce this illusion, even for a moment, requires very high talent. The same talent also causes a discomfort, of which one other source may be hinted.

Miss Austen has had admirers innumerable, including men as different as Macaulay, Tennyson and Coleridge. There can be no doubt of her work lasting. It lasts, not only because of her craft, but because she is representative. She speaks for a type, usually inarticulate or incapable of art, which has never, before or since, been able to speak for itself so well. She is a clear-eyed, calm, hardly passionate, by no means heartless, unmarried English lady: above all a lady. 'Even the sweetest woman,' says Nietzsche, 'is bitter.' But this is the penalty of sweetness; Miss Austen is not 'sweet,' and therefore not, or not fundamentally, bitter. Her gaze is like that of a mirror; it reflects daylight, with rare rays of tempered sun. But it is also feminine in a profound degree. She sees her world as men could not see it if they would, as they would feel ashamed of seeing it if they could, and as they admire her for seeing it; and they feel at once, disconcerted, how much her presentment omits, and how truthful it is nevertheless. This is the way of most women; they see what has all the while been under our nose, and show it to us, and laugh at us for our blindness. She, however, has none of their dependence or inconsequence, of which we at once take advantage. She is the woman our enemy. We could only have the advantage of her by taking her off her own ground; and, artist and humourist as she is, she knows this, and never quits her ground. The contest is a drawn one. She abides; we acknowledge her, we do not quite like her, and we quit her—perhaps run away from her—not without relief, bidding to such cold voices a somewhat long farewell.

CHAPTER VII

THE NOVEL OF SUSPENSE

I. Contrast with the novel of manners; a movement of expansion. Debt to older romance. Walpole; *Castle of Otranto.* Clara Reeve; *The Old English Baron* and *The Progress of Romance.*

II. The Oriental tale, its blending of fantasy and satire. William Beckford; *Vathek*; *The Princess Zulkaïs*; travels. Beckford's temper and influence; Byron's admiration.

III. William Godwin; *Caleb Williams*; *St. Leon*; other tales. Dr. John Moore; *Zeluco.* Mrs. Ann Radcliffe; notes of landscape; *Gaston de Blondeville*; *Romance of the Forest*; *The Italian*; *Mysteries of Udolpho.*

IV. Matthew Gregory Lewis; *The Monk.* Mrs. Shelley; *Frankenstein.* C. R. Maturin; the motive of terror and suspense; early tales; *Women*; *Melmoth the Wanderer,* its plan and characteristic power. Examples; mastery of musical prose. *Tales from Blackwood.* James Hogg, *Confessions of a Fanatic.*

V. Parodies of romance and the supernatural story. E. S. Barrett; *The Heroine.* Jane Austen; *Northanger Abbey.* Monstrous adventure and *blague*; Raspe's *Adventures of Baron Munchausen.*

I

It is now time to go back forty years and more, to the novel of suspense, which is a true descendant of old romance, and is therefore the renewal of something that the classical age had disowned and lost. It is also a school of example and warning, and in some slight measure of mischief, to the master of romance; and the shrewd and genial judgments passed upon it by Sir Walter Scott in his reviews of the novelists, prepare us for his own mixture of triumph and failure when he attempts the dreadful or the supernatural. From Miss Austen and her precursors, and from realism, we return with our zest sharpened for romance—sharpened by the very perfection of that realism. Who, indeed, has not felt stifled by it? Who has not been led, by *Northanger Abbey* itself, to wish with a boyish appetite for a real enchanted castle, and for crime, and for mystery? Even bastard romance is better than none. The real earth can never contain us. We must have our hippogriff. Not even the ironies of an exquisitely reasonable art can hold us for more than a season. We must go back to the thing derided, to the

thing that deserves derision, if we have nothing better. It keeps a certain advantage over those who unmask it. The perfection of that fine and feminine skill involves a certain movement of contraction, and means sacrifices. But in the contemporary and opposing school of sensation and marvel, of passion however strained, and of rhetoric however unreal, the movement is at least one of expansion. The windows are opened, the horizon is enlarged, the wings are fledged, and, in spite of all zigzag flights and absurdities, the earth is left behind. The writers of this group, in the nature of the case, are more unlike one another than the lively describers of manners, but they have traits in common, and some genius amongst them, and their vices are full of instruction.

Walpole, in the preface to his unbearable *Castle of Otranto* (1764), professes to unite the talk of real life with the wonders of romance, and so to reconcile 'nature' and 'imagination.' He is always acute in comment, and comes near to stating the true problem of the romancer; but when he sets to work, he only manages to scatter bald conversations amongst preposterous occurrences. *The Castle of Otranto*, with its bleeding statues and helmets suddenly cascading from the void, is remembered as something which was once laughed at, and which is still said in histories to have set the pattern of the 'Gothic' story. And so much it really did—in the sense that some faint and straggling lines of the pattern are to be traced in it. There is an intrigue; a pretence of describing some remote but real place and period; an attempt at colouring; and a dish of marvels, served cold. Yet, such as it is, *The Castle of Otranto* does presage a new life for romance in England, and takes up the thread which had never been wholly broken from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth. The debt, indeed, of Fielding and Richardson to the prose romance, which had died out in the classical age, is not to be ignored; it is real, if oblique. The stock figures of the hero, the heroine, the villain, the servant, the wise friend, the seductress, the sage elder, come to our great classical novelists from a score of sources—the old comedy, the romantic play, the tale in verse; and among these, no doubt, is the romance proper. But in Walpole and his followers the filiation is more direct; there is a revival, however feeble and unpromising; and with all manner of pauses, false experiments, retrogressions and sudden advances, the type develops, until it once more enters the borders of fine art. Some of the stages in its growth are now to be noticed. The tradition of *The Castle of Otranto* was first

carried forward by a prim and gentle dealer in the supernatural, Mrs. Clara Reeve, who was repelled by the raw expedients of Walpole—'a picture that walks out of its frame, a skeleton ghost in a hermit's cowl'—and was fain to keep her story 'within the utmost *verge* of probability'; and accordingly only deals in the clattering of a dead man's armour, and the hollow groans that proceed from his mouldering remains. She finally produces his ghost in full equipment, for a moment. Her purpose, however, is the same—'to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and the modern Novel'—and these requirements she puts in her neat way:

> There is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite the attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf.

Such is the aim of *The Old English Baron: a Gothic Story*, entitled, on its first appearance in 1777, *The Champion of Virtue*. The scene is laid 'in the minority of Henry the Sixth,' but, except for a single combat and an occasional archaism, the sentiments are those of a modern country house. There are the good boy of the didactic novel, Edmund, dispossessed of his inheritance, the wicked rival, the benevolent priest, and the sampler heroine. Miss Reeve dovetails her little plot aptly enough, and her limpid way of writing kept her book long alive, so that it was thrice reprinted late in the nineteenth century. It is really a domestic tale, not a novel of terror at all; but the affair of the ghost is pleasantly managed, as it might be in capable private theatricals, and there is the affectation, at any rate, of a definite historical date.

Mrs. Reeve's too elegant dialogues, *The Progress of Romance* (1785), which are conducted by shadowy speakers named Hortensius and Sophronia, lead us into a curious backwater of contemporary taste. She frankly turns her back on real life, and so far repudiates the programme of her master Walpole. She distinguishes the romance from the novel in a crude style that does not ill express the practice of the hour and the difference between Mrs. Radcliffe and Mrs. Opie. Her distinction is by no means meant impartially; it is made at the expense of the novel, and for the glorification of romance, which she tries to promote into a variety of the epic, itself assumed to be the noblest sort of fiction. Her criticisms of Fielding and Richardson are in a ladylike vein and devoid of zeal.

The romance is a heroic fable which treats of fabulous persons and things. The novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The romance in lofty and elevated language describes what never happened nor (*sic*) is likely to happen. The novel gives a familiar relation of such things as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friends or to ourselves.

The romance, however, that Mrs. Reeve admires is of the spun-out, marvellous, and sentimental sort; it is not the 'world of fine fabling' invented by the middle ages and Spenser, and defended by Hurd and Warton. Still she is by no means without reading, and in her forgotten book are preserved the names of many a story, of which the names may here more than suffice. Mrs. Sheridan's *Sidney Biddulph*, Mrs. Brooke's *Emily Montague*, and *The Delicate Distress*, by a Mrs. Griffiths, represent the kind of diet, no doubt, that Crabbe derides in his *Ellen Orford*:

> There 's something rapturous in distress, or, oh!
> Could Clementina bear her lot of wo?
> Or what she underwent could maiden undergo?

Nor need Mrs. Reeve's catalogue of the current 'moral tales well told as a warning to youth' be here transcribed. But she is probably the first writer to recount the Oriental or pseudo-Oriental stories—Hawkesworth's *Almoran*, and *The Loves of Othniel and Achshah*, are examples—that were eagerly devoured. The greatest of all these would hardly have earned her approval; *Vathek* appeared in the year after *The Progress of Romance*; and the story of Gebir and Charoba, soon to be used by Landor, occurs, in a watered form, in the same instructive work.

II

The type was not a new one, for it was in the classical age that the East, so long forgotten, came back to fertilise the fancy of the West. The material was first revealed in Galland's version of the *Arabian Nights*, and in the *Persian Tales* and the *Turkish Tales*. All these collections, already familiar in French, had been put into English in the age of Addison, whose *Mirza* and other fables, it is true, have no more 'taste' than the 'white of an egg.' The marriage of these immigrant stories with the classical spirit of reason, edification, and satire left a strange offspring—the *conte moral et fantastique*, which ranges from the purest and wildest fancy to the *Zadig* of Voltaire, where the Orientalism is simply a light arm of offence, and to

the loaded moralising of Johnson. The splendour and extravagance of the originals is imitated, but turns cold and pallid in the process, and their poignancy is transformed into an elaborate modern irony;—an irony which, in the hands of Voltaire, of Marmontel, of Johnson, and of Goldsmith, is pointed at the expense of human nature and human vanity and social convention. Meantime the real East ceases to be known or taken seriously, and its imaginative colouring is lost until the appearance of William Beckford[1] (1760-1844). In him, despite his share of eighteenth-century irony, there is a true revival; for the Eastern senses, wrought on by the drug imagination, expand, and dream, and build colossal toppling towers of pleasure and luxury; and then, finding how narrow after all is that infinite sphere, they fall back defeated, and rest on the pageant of daily life, on the din of the bazaars and the quarrels of merchants, and on ingenious anecdote and proverb. Something of all this is felt in Beckford's inventions, and in no other writing of the time.

The *History of the Caliph Vathek*[2] was completed in French about 1783, and published in that language in 1787. A flat and free English translation by the Rev. Samuel Henley, with notes, was overseen by the author; but, in disobedience to his orders, was published before the French original, in 1786. *Vathek* is in outward form a *conte moral*, but the ingredients come from Eastern literature and from the caldron of Beckford's own fancy. He had never been out of Europe, but the rightness of his costume and colouring is praised by Byron and other judges, whilst the wit and passion, and the sombre sense of fatality and mortal tragedy, are wonderfully harmonised with the externals, and the result is a classic. Vathek wearies of the 'palace of the five senses,' which though surfeited are not asleep, and his exorbitant pride and lust lead him to the use of black magic. This is the beginning; at the end is the famed Hall of Eblis,[3] whose dwellers cover their flaming hearts with their hands, as they suffer the reward of 'unrestrained passions and atrocious actions'; midway is the pretty mischievous idyll of Gulchenrouz and Nouronihar; and there are wild comic interludes, such as the scene where the 'cursed Indian' is spurned by the madness of the people 'like an invulnerable football,' and is left 'still retaining his rotundity of figure.' Some parts of the book, no doubt, are like the duller stretches in a bad dream; but we are borne on in a world where cause and purpose lose their meaning, and events please or pain us without reason and without awakening sur-

prise. Vathek *must* not eat certain melons, though there is no reason why he should not; and yet, in the course of his royal rake's progress, eat them he does. The mixture of all this with the Voltairian temper is Beckford's characteristic.

Whilst writing *Vathek*, Beckford had prepared three 'episodes,'[1] or intercalated tales, which were to have been told by victims wandering in the Hall of Eblis; these are named in the first French edition, and Beckford read some of them out to Samuel Rogers. The stories of the Prince Kalilah and the Princess Zulkaïs, of Prince Alasi, and of Prince Barkiarokh, have lately been printed in the French. The first of these is told by Zulkaïs herself, and is unfinished; but there seems good reason for the heart of the princess to have been turned into a coal of fire. *Per quod quis peccat, per idem et torquetur.* Zulkaïs and her twin brother Kalilah are ominously born; their father, the Emir, has murdered a holy man who rebuked him for dabbling in sorceries. They are bathed in infernal essences under the auspices of the Ginns, and grow up endowed with a furious vitality. Kalilah is removed to learn manly arts, but Zulkaïs pines and rages for his company. Then she too is banished, to a land of wizardry, where a sage, the Climber of Palm-trees, lives amongst his flock of colossal ostriches, and receives her as his guest. The sage is under covenant with Eblis to deliver him twenty unfortunate souls; but they must sin first, before they can be damned. He sees the unlawful passion of Zulkaïs, and promises to satisfy it if she will face a most formidable Ginn. Zulkaïs crosses a cave, where she seems to see reptiles with human faces, into a vast room, paved with flesh-coloured and sanguine-veined marble, and covered with motley tapestries, 'lesquels faisaient un movement lent, comme si des gens étouffés sous leur poids les avoient soulevés. . . .' There the fragment stops: it has the lordly and bitter sensua'ity, oppressed by the shadow of fate and penance, which Beckford understood.

Lord Chatham called Beckford 'my young vivid friend,' and observed, 'He is just as much compounded of the elements of air and fire as I was.' Beckford, like Blake, was a dreamer, as defiant, as full of stubborn vitality; but he was ironical and divided in soul, knowing the pain of curious pleasures, and revelling in things that are strange and costly and transitory; not, like Blake, living the life of vision with a single mind. Blake was poor; Beckford was heir to the wealth that begot rather than satisfied his dreams. Of this wealth his genius seems a sort of exhalation, having the faults that

attend—one almost says that beseem—such a nature: a streak of insolence, race-pride, and want of measure: faults which are at least a relief in the age of reason and philanthropy. His youthful letters are vehement and coloured, and foretell the man. He produced two works of imagination: *Vathek* and Fonthill Abbey; the latter a 'folly' that began to fall down even in his lifetime, although, to the regret of his Neronian fancy, not in his presence. He liked the grandiose and wasteful, but his connoisseurship was fastidious and even catholic. He was an autocrat among collectors, lived till eighty-four outbidding and bargaining, and was hard to take in. His worldly wit and elfish satirical fancy kept him from being his own dupe, and are a kind of preservative acid to his Oriental fantasies. This lifelong habit of mind is seen in his boyish joke on his housekeeper, whose head he filled with legends of the family pictures, afterwards published as *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters* (1800): and the criticisms are such as these:

'The astonishment of the head at finding itself off its own shoulders, was expressed to admiration.' 'She had chosen Graff of Nuremberg for her husband, merely to study the *Nud* in a modest way.' 'An Italian painter, by name Insignificanti, remarked on the delicacy of his pencil.'

In the same temper he treated the Duchess of Gordon, whom he suspected of intentions; he feasted her royally at Fonthill for a week, but refused once to see her. He published wild parodies of the 'Minerva Press' romances. He drew sharp Heine-like pictures of grandees and clerics in the Peninsula. His palate for beautiful splendour, for orange thickets and splendid apartments and Moorish carving, is delightfully crossed by a kind of Cervantesque pleasantry at the cost of his hosts, the Prior and the Almoner. He loves the picturesqueness of a big feast, and the sight of bland, adroit, holy men torpid with enjoyment. His books and notes of travel[1] were first published in 1783 as *Dreams, Waking Thoughts, and Incidents*, and afterwards in 1834 with many changes. *Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha* (1835) followed. Beckford has a more accurate vision of foreign scenery than any English writer between Gray and Ruskin, Wordsworth not excluded. He revives the sleeping perception of colour, and finds the words for it. His account of the Red Indian's Paradise recalls Chateaubriand. It is drawn from books; but he sees for himself the 'serene light' of the full moon 'on the pale gray

of the olives'; the 'faint gleam of the sunlight melting the deadly white of the thick clouds'; and the 'melancholy blue' of an Italian prospect. His most nobly-wrought descriptions are those of the Chartreuse, of Cintra, and of the road on which he galloped alone between Alcobaça and Batalha, with its 'lizards as green as emeralds, ascending the sides of the causeway, and looking at me, I thought, with kind and friendly eyes.' The colour and cadence of Beckford's prose, which are natural, and also conscious, but not overstudied, are of course better perceived in these books of travel than in *Vathek*, where the English was only revised by him; and they grow out of the surcharged and unclarified style of his youthful letters, which have their own charm. In the renewal of our imaginative prose Beckford's honours, like Maturin's, require asserting; and they are obscured by his choice of a foreign language for his greatest book.

Beckford was admired, naturally, by Byron[1] and Disraeli. With Byron, in his shrewd odd way, he refused to risk a meeting; their pride might have clashed. In both there was a mixture of hot and cold, of passion and satire; and though Byron had no such hold as Beckford on the preterhuman East, and could imagine no kind of Arabian Night of the same order, his earlier notion of his heroes and himself is foretold and influenced, as has often been remarked, by the figure of Eblis:

> His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours; in his large eyes appeared both pride and despair; his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light.

This is no Oriental figure; Eblis, in Beckford's original, has a bristly head of hair and beard; it is Milton's hero a little humanised, and the type comes to pervade the fiction between Beckford and Scott. The features are those of the 'anti-hero,' as Miss Austen calls him, who appears in Mrs. Radcliffe, Godwin, and Maturin. Disraeli, in *Alroy*, also frankly owned the spell, to the delight of Beckford in his old age, and flowing compliments were interchanged in the Eastern taste.

III

The doctrinaire succeeds the fantast. William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793, see Ch. IX.), which told so powerfully on the poets, is unread, but one at least of his stories, *Caleb Williams* (1794), remains alive, and his fiction is not to be

classed with his *Life of Chaucer* and other honest jobs. What is the link between the two Godwins, the builder of abstract card-houses, lofty but ephemeral, and the inventor of criminal or alchemical fiction? It is not only that the doctrine, the prosy ethics, invade the novels and at times choke them. The link is found in the psychology. In his life, as he went round 'preaching and holding the hat,' he was owlishly remote from human things, or undignifiedly close to them. But he had a turn for literary vivisection, and especially for the analysis of remorse or self-torture, and rises to a kind of cold vehemence in describing it. His sufferers live, the figures around them are faint and forgettable.

The doctrine of *Caleb Williams* is of interest as a symptom of the time. On one side it is revolutionary: 'a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man': a protest for the right of the crushed classes to justice at the hand of a besotted squirearchy and magistracy: a denunciation, like that of Reade or Dickens, against the cruelty of prisons: a claim on behalf of the righteous individual against oppression. Williams, the detector of crime, suffers in these ways at the hands of the murderer, Falkland, a person of place and consideration; and Tyrrel, the murdered man, is himself an oppressor of the same sort. The conception of the criminal himself chasing the detective is original. But in another way the book is anti-romantic. Tyrrel, after many crimes, knocks Falkland down in a public assembly. Falkland, though 'of a noble nature,' slips out, knifes him, and throws the crime on two innocents who are hanged. This he does, we hear, from a false notion of the ignominy attached to being thus knocked down: 'thou imbibedst the poison of chivalry with thy earliest youth . . . from that moment thou only continuedst to live to the phantom of departed honour.' This is like some tale of Crabbe: there is the same criticism of the false point of honour. It is notable that despite all such doctrine Godwin took care to make both his criminals mixed, if he could not quite make them real, characters; and that despite his pompous, preaching style he can produce an atmosphere heavily charged with terror and unspoken accusation. The silent struggle between Falkland and Williams, his young secretary, who admires, fears, suspects him, and draws at last an avowal from him, only to fall into his power and be hounded into misfortune and disbelieved, is more skilfully told than anything of the same sort until Lockhart's *Adam Blair*. The detective novel in England

has ever since been crude in its psychology, depending on ingeniously woven events rather than on complex motive. One of the curious episodes in the book is that which introduces a band of doctrinaire thieves, who refuse to 'stain' their 'cause' with 'cruelty, malice, and revenge,' and who are 'thieves without a licence at open war with another set of men who are thieves according to law'—namely, the holders of property.

Thus Godwin had the makings of an artist. His story of the composition of *Caleb Williams*[1] is not unlike Poe's analysis of *The Raven*. He plotted out the book backwards. The third volume was to be the merciless harrying of a terrified victim through a string of adventures. The second was to give the motive for the persecution: 'a secret murder, to the investigation of which the innocent victim' of the pursuit 'should be impelled by an unconquerable spirit of curiosity.' It was lastly—in the first volume—needful to create an interest in the murderer and explain his power to do mischief. He was accordingly made not only a man of great fortune and great intellect, but possessed originally of 'a mighty store of amiable dispositions and virtues,' which are in some sort the propelling cause of his crime. In this plan Godwin succeeded, except that the transformation of Tyrrel from a philanthropist into a fiend is not made credible. The satanic colouring is hard to paint upon the features of a high-minded humanitarian theorist; and it is amusing to see the author of *Political Justice* making himself 'extremely conversant with the *Newgate Calendar* and the *Lives of the Pirates*,' and 'tracing a certain similitude between the story of Caleb Williams and the tale of Bluebeard.'

St. Leon (1799) is a tedious, odd mixture of the sham historical novel and the moral tale, in which Godwin tries to retract the slight that he had seemed to cast in *Political Justice* (the first edition especially) on 'the affections and charities of private life.' 'True wisdom will recommend to us individual attachments.' To drive home the proposition he proceeds to 'mix human feelings and passions with incredible situations.' St. Leon is a young chevalier of the period when 'Marot, Rabelais, *Erasmus*, and Scaliger' were contemporaries; and, after gambling away his substance, falls in with a mysterious stranger. This personage, though destitute and soon to die, is able to give him the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone. 'I have,' says St. Leon, 'in my possession the choice of being as wealthy as I please, and the gift of

immortal life.' The gifts bring him no good, and cut him off, in particular, from the family affections. He is suspected of murdering the stranger, owing to his sudden wealth; is disgraced, is imprisoned by the Inquisition, and breaks his wife's heart. He becomes magically young again, but no one can recognise him, and he loses all care for life. Finally he has to fight with his own son. The heavy sermons of Godwin are poor refreshment, but the book is curious for its triple pretence of doctrine, supernaturalism, and history. *Fleetwood* (1805) is another dull disquisitive story. *Cloudesley* (1830) is a work of Godwin's old age, rambling and absurd, but by no means without remnants of his power. Cloudesley, like Caleb Williams, is in the secret of a crime; but is also an accomplice, and plays cat-and-mouse with his fellow-criminal; and his own glimpses and waverings of conscience are skilfully told. There is a peculiar *reflection* of flame, without the heat, in all Godwin's stories.

A villain of different complexion from Godwin's is seen in Dr. John Moore's *Zeluco* (1786); he is not much less black, or much more real, than the creations of the terror-mongers; but he is shown by daylight, in a setting of real manners and incidents, not by limelight. Herein Zeluco is a reversion to the patterns of Blifil and Ferdinand Count Fathom. He has 'a genteel figure and alluring manners,' and is 'constitutionally intrepid' and 'an admirable swordsman.' When a boy he coolly squeezes a pet sparrow to death: in his manhood he excels in a vein of 'blasphemous irony,' and is so cruel a master of his plantations that his slaves howl for joy at his departure. He strangles his infant; is vain, malicious, and gross: but is a great self-tormentor, with unlucky rags of a conscience. Finally, when duly stabbed, he weakens, repents, apologises. All this is a tribute, and sometimes a skilful one, to that idea of villainy that haunted our novelists for half a century: but it is really a deflection of Moore's talent for portraiture and satire. He is a more travelled Fielding, with a touch of the same broad temper and the same gift. His Mr. Squander, who will have it that a picture is either by 'Guido *or* Rheni': and his two Scotsmen, Buchanan and Targe, who begin a social glass in friendship, but end with a duel over the character of Mary Queen of Scots: his Nerina, the treacherous mistress of Zeluco; are all real and solid figures. Moore recorded his travels in Italy, Germany, and France; judged the discipline of the Prussian army, and met Voltaire, who told him that the English nation was 'like a hogshead of their own strong beer,

the top of which was flattish, the bottom dregs, and the middle excellent.' His books on the French Revolution [1] are of value, and he followed somewhat the same course as Wordsworth and many more, beginning with a liberal and humanitarian enthusiasm, and taking a chill afterwards.

Walked towards Shakspeare's Cliff; the fleet still in view. . . . The French coast, white and high, and clear in the evening gleam. Evening upon the sea becoming melancholy, silent, and pale. A leaden-coloured vapour rising upon the horizon, without confounding the line of separation; the ocean whiter, till the last deep twilight falls, when all is one, gradual, inseparable, indistinguishable grey.

No complaining of the wind, but a strong and awful monotony. . . . Nothing sudden; nothing laboured; all a continuance of pure power, without effort.

The massy tower at the end of the east terrace [at Windsor] stood up high in shade; but immediately from behind it the moonlight spread, and showed the flat line of wall at the end of that terrace, with the figure of a sentinel moving against the light, as well as a profile of the dark precipice below. . . . No sound but the faint clinking of the soldier's accoutrements, as he paced on watch, and the remote voices of people turning the end of the east terrace, appearing for a moment in the light there and vanishing. In a high window of the tower a light. Why is it so sublime to stand at the foot of a dark tower, and look up its height to the sky and the stars? . . . It was on this terrace, surely, that Shakspeare received the first hint of the time for the appearance of his ghost.

These passages are from Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's [2] private journal of her travels; the first is dated in the autumn of 1797, when Dorothy Wordsworth, in the west country, was writing her diary also, and was soon to note the 'night cloudy but not dark' and the 'sky covered over with one continuous cloud,' which pass into *Christabel*. Mrs. Radcliffe's talent and style can be more justly judged from such extracts, written only for herself, than from the wrought-up, literary landscapes of her stories, or of her *Journey through Holland and the Lakes* (1796). They show her eye for sad colour, and for the formidable face of nature; for large, 'romantic' masses of architecture, confused under the starlight, with a single window shining; the whole being a *mise en scène* for those spectral effects, which appealed to the thirst of her own day.

One of her tales, *Gaston de Blondeville*, posthumously published, is very downright in its method; for here a real murdered ghost stalks in broad day and scares King Henry III. and a whole hall full of barons. But her habit, much deplored by

critics, yet most entertaining, is to work up her mysteries and then dutifully explain them away. The groans, hideous faces, and footsteps, turn out to belong to a waxen image, or to a concealed female prisoner : a rationalising process for which the reader in the end comes to ache exceedingly. In *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) there is a certain anticipation of *Jane Eyre* ; for the sequestered wife, the source of the phantom terrors, is finally discovered in the closed wing of the tower ; she is, unlike Mrs. Rochester, quite in her senses, though her condition is reduced. In *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) there are a bad marquis, four or five thwarted abductions, secret chambers, and midnight patterings ; and there is also one almost real personage, the traitor La Motte, who plays Hubert to the Marquis's King John, and like Hubert relents. The 'MS.' which Adeline reads at midnight is an early draft of that which Miss Austen's Catherine Morland sought in the ebony cabinet. But there was more material for *Northanger Abbey* in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). We have to imagine the shiver with which the younger sort, in the generation before Scott, read the adventures of the orphan heiress, Emily D'Aubert, who fell into the hands of the bandit Montoni and was exposed to the terrors of his castle in the Apennines. It is here that the cold air of reason is most studiously let in upon the sources of terror. Mrs. Radcliffe waits till the shock has told, and then discloses that it is caused by a trick. But in doing so she really works on more than one hitherto untouched nerve ; and in especial, on the sense of alarm caused by isolated and untraceable sounds. There is much scenery in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and a feeling for the sombre picturesque ; but on closer scrutiny the lines are seen to be indefinite, and the Italian scenes were written without a knowledge of the country. It is the rhetoric of landscape ; and this had hardly yet appeared in English fiction.

In *The Italian* (1797), the supper of horrors is one of many courses ; but here again every dish is snatched from our lips untasted, like those set before Sancho Panza in the Island of Barataria. Schedoni is about to slay his sleeping daughter, but sees a miniature on her breast just in time. The young lover goes four times before the Inquisition, and is just not racked. But the suspense is well wrought up, and the two villains appositely destroy each other. One of them, Schedoni, has the true trade-mark ; his face 'bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated.' He also has the traditional eyes, both of

which are 'intense and fiery,' as those of the second villain are also. This is more liberal than the allowance given to the Caliph Vathek, one of whose eyes was of the ordinary kind, while the other felled people like bullocks. Like Maturin, but without his power, and like Lewis, Mrs. Radcliffe traffics in the terrors of the Holy Office. Her landscapes leave a hazy sense of bigness and colour; and nothing else interrupts the swift pace and ingenious changes of the tale, which holds us once we have surrendered ourselves to the world of melodrama. The novels of sensation written a hundred years later are much more tedious.

IV

All these writers had done their worst, in prose, to practise upon the nerves of fear and wonder; and in prose their race was to continue. Meanwhile the same note is heard more delicately sounding here and there in verse; in the supernatural ballads saved by Percy, in the translations of Gray from the Norse, in *Tam o' Shanter*, and in Blake. The two currents do not fairly meet until Scott, who used both verse and prose, though seldom very well, for such purposes. But an earlier point of coalescence is found in the productions of Matthew Gregory Lewis[1] (1775-1818), who died early, yet not sooner than his own notoriety. His competent vulgarity of style caught the public for a season; his kindly and naïve character, recorded genially by Sir Walter Scott, is comically at odds with the 'rape, murder, and superlatives' of his printed works, which include tales, plays, and poems (Ch. x.). He was incited by admiration for Mrs. Radcliffe to fillip the public with a three-man beetle; and so, in 1795, when, as in blank verse he observes, 'I scarce have seen my twentieth year,' he published *The Monk*. But the scenery, the tentative yet often delicate colours of Mrs. Radcliffe are gone; there is no imaginative suspense left; the supernatural, no longer explained or averted, is blatant, and the devil himself appears twice; once, according to tradition, as a seraph of light, and once undisguised. His victim is the monk, Ambrosio, a companion of the Schedonis. The crimes of Ambrosio are described with boyish indecency. It says much for the genius of Maturin that *The Monk* did not at once extinguish all the modish pictures of satanic priests and the Inquisition; for the anti-Roman bray is heard with curious frequency in this school of fiction. The language of Lewis has some of the lower journalistic qualities.

There was an outcry, and he abridged his book, but was careful not to expurgate too much. He wrote much else, but 'Monk' Lewis he remained. These things

> Be but as bugs to fearen babes withal,
> Compared to the creatures in the sea's entrall.

This streak of the morbid-grotesque lingers in the second generation of romantic poets, with some of whom Lewis was acquainted. Other sources, such as the Jacobean drama, are found influencing Beddoes; and the subject of Keats's *Lamia* is drawn from Burton's *Anatomy*. But the party gathered in June 1816 at the Villa Diodati in Sécheron were incited by a book of German tales to their well-known pastime of capping ghost stories. Each of them was to write one, and some of the results survive. Shelley's, if he made it, is lost; but the streak was in him, indeed it was almost a taint. He had paid his toll before by his boyish and curiously worthless compositions, *St. Irvyne* and *Zastrozzi*; in *The Sensitive Plant* and elsewhere he exceeds, rather than excels, in ghastly detail; and on hearing *Christabel* recited, if the anecdote is true, he shrieked on suddenly beholding in vision a woman with eyes upon her breasts. Byron began a fragment called *The Vampyre*,[1] and John William Polidori, his young physician, who, like Mrs. Shelley describes the competition, wrought up Byron's beginnings into a story with the same title. But the real fruit of that evening was Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1817). It was born of a dream, and the dream was born of a passage she had read in Erasmus Darwin, who was experimenting in the artificial production of life. In that dream she beheld the monster coming to consciousness under the operations of Frankenstein, 'the modern Prometheus': 'the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together,' which begins to 'stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion.' The crimes of this giant, who stifles women and children, are not out of the ordinary except for their number. But his literary ancestry is a mixed one. He studies Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, Plutarch, and *Werther*, and unites the sentiments of Milton's Satan with those of *Political Justice*:

> Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred. . . . I, like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me.

Yet only a giant beheld in a nightmare by the daughter of Godwin could have discoursed thus:

I intended to reason. This passion is detrimental to me; for you do not reflect that you are the cause of its success. If any felt emotions of benevolence towards me, I should return them an hundred and an hundred-fold; for that one creature's sake, I should make peace with the whole kind!

But Mrs. Shelley's force of imagination is shown, and also strained to breaking point, in the scenes where the demon relates his own sensations at the birth of life, his delight in nature, his agony when the world hounds him away in horror, and his rage to punish mankind when Frankenstein refuses to conjure into being a female mate, a monstrous Eve, for his consolation; and when, once more like Satan, he feels remorse over the corpse of Frankenstein, and seeks his death, under a grim arctic light, on a solitary 'ice-raft.' The colossal puppet of Frankenstein, the 'modern Prometheus,' has reached the popular fancy, and his name is still confused with that of his supposed creator. It may be added that other tales by Mary Shelley, such as *Transformation* and *The Mortal Immortal*, are weaker dealings in the preternatural; and her widowed life in Italy inspired some of the sketches, idyllic or pathetic, that she contributed to various annuals. The best of them please by their facile and fluent rhythms and their simple scenery. *The Last Man* (1826) is a fantasy on the same subject as Campbell's poem, and contains an odd idealisation of Byron, or of the Byronic hero, in the person of a Count Raymond. But meanwhile had arisen the most potent of all the terror-mongers.

It was not for nothing that Charles Robert Maturin[1] (1782-1824) was befriended and admired by Scott[2] and Byron,[3] and left his print on French romanticism. At first sight he seems an Irish clergyman of rigid eighteenth-century tastes, who condemns Rousseau[4] and sensibility in order to praise Miss Edgeworth and common sense. Human nature, he truly says, has 'wants utterly unprovided for in the statutes of romance.' But he ministers, more than any of our novelists, to one of the wants of romance itself. He is the first to find a notation and a rhythm for obscure, damped, and half-paralysed feeling, and 'for the fear arising from objects of invisible terror.' His aim is that

> of darkening the gloomy, and deepening the sad; of painting life in extremes; of representing those struggles of passion when the soul trembles on the verge of the unlawful and the unhallowed.

He begins with a wish to edify, but forgets it under the pressure of his genius. A sentence that he writes on love shows him in

the act of escaping, and also how far romance had travelled between Richardson and Scott :

> Its folly and fantasy, its high, remote, incommunicable modes of feeling and expression, its nice and subtle pleasures, its happiness that mocks mortality and its despair that defies religion, seldom can, *seldom ought to be*, represented.

Maturin's power, of which there are traces in his once-famous verse tragedy of *Bertram* (see Ch. XXI.), was only realised in prose. The first of his six stories, *The Fatal Revenge*,[1] *or the Family of Montorio*, written at the age of twenty-four, is a late survivor of the Radcliffian species. There is a terrible monk, Schemoli, after the likeness of Schedoni, an intricate vendetta, and many other familiar ingredients. ' The date of that style of writing was out when I was a boy,' says Maturin, ' and I had not the power to revive it.' But the command of imagery and lyrical cadence is evident.

> In the deep and silent hour, when the night vapour, fine as an infant's breath, stands in the air—when the leaf of the poplar and aspen is unmoved—when there is a hissing in the ear for very stillness, then I love to lean from my casement and utter his name —once and softly.

This breathless, wound-up manner, marked by dashes and want of relief, is in the regular tradition ; but the power in handling it is new. Maturin had some of the nice introspectiveness, though none of the religion, of the mystic, and his description, in the same tale, of Ippolito's ecstasy, as he awakes from his noonday sleep and the waking world has not yet gathered round him, is unparalleled in the prose of the time. There is less of this quality in *The Wild Irish Boy* (1808), written in letter-form, and in *The Milesian Chief* (1812), but Gustave Planche's [2] words on the latter story are true of both : ' C'est un livre où étincellent çà et là des pages magnifiques.' Here Maturin turns to describing Irish scenes and personages ; but his ' Milesian ' is not only a martyr-rebel, but an unreal Ossianic hero, descended from the ' ancient bards ' ; not an Irishman of any known variety. *Women ; or, Pour et Contre*, popular in a French version under the name of *Eva ; ou Amour et Religion*, is more noteworthy, and ought to be reprinted. Here, too, the spring of terror is hardly touched. Maturin had a real, though hardly a practised gift for representing manners and humours. The plot is a violent one, turning on the rivalry of a mother and a daughter, who do not know their kinship, for the love of the same youth, whose flutterings

between them are shown with merciless skill. But the ending is grim and strained; for the youth and the daughter die, leaving the mother to her remorse. The family of repulsive Irish Methodists, amongst whom the young Eva is brought up, are sharply discriminated: the holy-worldly father, the plain and dignified mother, and the hateful red-headed Tartuffian cleric. Eva is unlettered, an inarticulate and silent sufferer, who cannot argue, but only loves. 'There were indeed flowers under the snow, but one was chilled in the effort to bring them to light.' She is taken by some persons of fashion to hear the singing of her splendid rival, really her mother, Zaira, who, as the reviewers pointed out, was an ambitious study after Madame de Staël's Corinne. The youth, De Courcy, drifts to Paris in the wake of Zaira, a lover on probation, but in appearance her ignominious cavalier. So the two women break their hearts over one weakling, whom neither of them wins. Maturin's last story, *The Albigenses* (1824), does not want a certain pomp and brilliance, but the following of Scott is at once too close and too far off. The passions of the Covenanters are transferred to the thirteenth century, and the trappings of chivalry from the Black Knight to Simon de Montfort.

Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), Maturin's masterpiece, and the greatest of all the 'novels of terror,' consists of several stories, nested or interlaced to the point of confusion, but separate in place and circumstance. The scene, which opens in modern Ireland, shifts to Spain, then to an Indian island, then to Spain, then to the England of the Restoration, then back to Spain, and closes in Ireland. All these tales are linked only by the fateful appearances of John Melmoth, who has traits at once of Faustus, of Mephistopheles, and of the Wandering Jew, as well as of Milton's Satan, and who is yet a tragic figure of a new species. He has dealt in unlawful arts; has traded with the powers of darkness and lost his salvation; has gained in exchange the gift of prolonged life and unfading prime, of passing through walls and over seas, and of paralysing a mob with a wave of his hand. He is an agent of the enemy of man, for whom he seeks new victims. But the original point is that Melmoth seeks them for his own deliverance. He is allowed by his contract to shift his barren powers, together with his hopeless destiny, upon any innocent soul whose consent can be obtained.

> It has been said that this power has been accorded to me, that I might be enabled to tempt wretches in their fearful hour of extremity, with the promise of deliverance and immunity, on condition of their exchanging situations with me.

The half-dozen tales of which the book consists are all framed upon this plan. Each intended victim, in whatever land or age, is brought to dire extremity, and then appears Melmoth with his smooth or terrible speech, offering release on the *incommunicable condition*; which is never put into words but once,[1] but left to be supposed. Some of the tempted die, some escape, but none succumb. In his last words, before Melmoth flings himself over a precipice in Ireland, near the home of his forefathers, he exclaims:

> I have been on earth a terror, but not an evil to its inhabitants. None can participate in my destiny but with his own consent—*none have consented*[2]—none can be involved in its tremendous penalties, but by participation. I alone must sustain the penalty. . . . No one has ever exchanged destinies with Melmoth the Wanderer. *I have traversed the world in the search, and no one, to gain that world, would lose his own soul.*

In one episode, the *Tale of the Indians*, this shape of malignity and terror is for a while humanised. He finds a maiden, Immalee, or Isidora, upon a lonely island, which is described with idyllic beauty. She is one of Rousseau's children of nature; in remorse he abandons his designs upon her; but meets her later in Spain, and brings her to her end. This is the only streak of kindness or charm in a tale that bears upon the chord of terror to the point of the grotesque. The very elements share in Maturin's extravagance; a certain shower of rain is (as Mr. Boythorn might have said) 'perhaps the most violent that was ever precipitated upon the earth.' Melmoth's superhuman length of days makes us smile when he remembers 'a trifling but characteristic circumstance that happened in the reign of Louis XIII.' But Maturin, in his own phrase, 'indulged in a splendid aristocracy of imagination.' The pictures of Monçada suffering in prison and of his failure to escape are a triumph of furious fancy; and the opening pages, relating the arrival of Melmoth's young descendant at his ruined home, while the peasants whisper of the presence of the powers of darkness, would suffice to justify the existence of the 'novel of terror.' No one so powerfully struck the notes of insane unlocated fear and nightmare suspense. The punishment of bombast may follow, and Thackeray make excellent easy fun of Melmoth's awful eyes; but it is Baudelaire who is right when he exclaims: 'Ce rire glace et tord les entrailles . . . en déchirant et en brûlant les lèvres du rieur irrésistible.' The genius both of Hugo and

of Balzac[1] felt the spell; so that Maturin, like Poe after him, won a definite and deserved, if an exiled influence. All his tales were soon put into French.

Without balance or constructive gift or measure, he can write. It is true that he writes, as he feels, in italics, and that he is too lengthy. But he and Beckford alone of their school have a style. He has a sense for the concerted music of the prose period, which often reminds us even of De Quincey's. His sentences are briefer, more spontaneous, without the ineffable dream-architecture and mighty harmonies of De Quincey's; but he has colour and musical sonority, and also the gift of a kind of sudden, poetic epigram. 'My life was a sea without a tide.' 'All colours disappear in the night, and despair has no diary.' 'He died as he had lived, in a kind of avaricious delirium.' 'The locks were so bad and the keys so rusty, that it was always like the cry of the dead in the house when the locks were turned.' Two longer passages may be added:

> You will hardly believe, sir, that I slept profoundly; yet I did; but I would rather never sleep again, than awake so horribly. I awoke in the darkness of day. I was to behold the light no more: nor to watch those divisions of time, which, by measuring our portions of suffering, appear to diminish them. . . . These eras by which we compute the hours of darkness and inanity are inconceivable to any but those who are situated as I was.

The movement there is staccato, as in many sentences of Sir Thomas Browne. Elsewhere it is more undulating, and fairly recalls that of the opium-eater. The diction is on, or over, the edge of absurdity; but what a feeling for epithet, what a justified boldness of image, what an onset and harmony!

> The darkness increased, and the clouds collected like an army that had mustered its utmost force, and stood in obdured and collected strength against the struggling light of heaven. A broad, red, and dusky line of gloomy light gathered round the horizon, like an usurper watching the throne of an abdicated sovereign, and, expanding its portentous circle, sent forth alternately flashes of lightning, pale and red;—the murmur of the sea increased, and the arcades of the banyan-tree, that had struck its patriarchal root not five hundred paces from where Immalee stood, resounded the deep and almost unearthly murmur of the approaching storm through all its colonnades; the primeval trunk rocked and groaned, and the everlasting fibres seemed to withdraw their grasp from the earth, and quiver in air at the sound. Nature, with every voice she could inspire from earth, or air, or water, announced danger to her children.

After Maturin such assaults upon the feelings might have seemed to be exhausted, but they went on nevertheless. Many of the *Tales from Blackwood*, which date from 1821 onwards, are in a similar vein, and show the misguidance or frustration of considerable power. They often relate a situation of racking physical peril, which closes in by logical degrees upon the victim, until he is just rescued or not rescued at all. A doctor is shut in a copper boiler which gets slowly hotter and hotter, and he takes notes of his symptoms while he can. In a tale by William Maginn, a bell-ringer is pinned just beneath a vibrating bell, which nearly crushes and maddens him. A chaplain has a deadly bout with a condemned murderer in his cell. One such story, *The Iron Shroud* (1830), by William Mudford, is typical. A seven-windowed prison, diabolically contrived, contracts each day by the subtraction of a single window, and at last turns into a coffin. The style in these stories is flushed and emphatic, and tends to defeat itself; and the various writers seem to be groping, sometimes with gleams of success, for the secret of Poe's undiscovered and inquisitorial art. The work of the American, Charles Brockden Brown, may here just be mentioned, especially his highly ingenious detective story, *Edgar Huntly* (1801), in which a mysterious crime is committed by a sleep-walker. In England, the power of dreadful suggestion is recaptured much later, in Lytton's story of *The Haunted and the Haunters* (1859); while it reappears in *Jane Eyre*, in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and in *The Woman in White*, in varying degree. But these are works of larger make, and the supernatural and the uncanny are not their only interests.

Other by-ways of fiction, mostly blind alleys, can be followed up by the reader of the *Tales from Blackwood*. The German-*macabre* manner, which is singularly unsatisfying, is often essayed. In one story a virtuous youth is entrapped into marrying the headsman's daughter and succeeding to his trade; he practises his prentice hand on a ruffian, who proves to be an old college friend. In another there is a struggle with a murderer (another German) and with his mistress, upon a floating beacon. The Evil One often figures, and sometimes causes his victims to take one another's personalities, with grotesque effect; a motive that is inherited from Hoffmann and his school. Other tales deal in Italian scenery; and this may be the last rag of Mrs. Radcliffe's influence. *Di Vasari* (1820) and *Antonio di Carrara* (1832) are examples of this species. In others, again, there is a double dose of peda-

gogy and sentiment, mixed according to the old prescription; as in *The First and Last Kiss* (1829), where a miscreant about to be hanged breaks down in the presence of his son, hitherto unknown to him. In these stray examples there is ample talent and energy displayed; they serve to show some of the minor currents of fiction towards the end of the period. Other novelists who flourish after the appearance of *Waverley* may be reserved (see Ch. XII.). But one other handling of a preterhuman subject, in which the enemy of man is a chief performer, may be noticed now.

This is James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, afterwards entitled *Confessions of a Fanatic*. The style and psychological insight seemed so foreign to the Ettrick Shepherd, that the work was sometimes assigned to Lockhart: unless, indeed, the Enemy himself were the author. But Hogg's manuscript draft was found, and the credit is his.[1] He may, indeed, have been studying in the school of *Adam Blair*. The 'confessions,' at first sight, seem but the diary of a religious maniac; but the conception is subtler than that. The time is the seventeenth century, and the story is first told from the point of view of the onlookers. It produces a true impression of witchcraft and *diablerie*, and reminds us even of the masterpieces of Meinhold. The antinomian doctrine utilised resembles, however, that of Browning's *Johannes Agricola*. The elected and saved soul, free to sin unharmed, is tempted to use its power, and hideous crimes are the consequence. The tempter is an imposing personage, with a haggard and defiant gaze, who may be described as Satan posing as the Satanic hero. This being has the skill to resemble any person whom he pleases, including his victim. The bewildering havoc that ensues is described with undeniable power; but the slow yielding of the criminal, and his tension and agony of brain, are yet more remarkably analysed. This late and remarkable offshoot of the tale of terror appeared in 1824, and has the odd touch of sterile excitement and the copious hot flow of language that hung about the stories produced in that decade. But all such extremes of fantasy, in the course of nature, soon cause a reaction; the soul cries out against them, and we betake ourselves to the satire and burlesque, more or less delicate, that they generate; for the rational spirit, the eighteenth-century spirit, once more asserts itself in these shapes.

The tale of terror and the language of sensibility are both travestied together in *The Heroine* (1813), by Eaton Stannard

Barrett,[1] a young Irish journeyman of letters, of whom little else is known. It is a boisterous, male extravaganza of considerable skill. The quiet and permanent art of Miss Austen is not attempted; but in its happy-go-lucky method and unfailing high spirits *The Heroine* recalls rather Fielding's or Sheridan's treatment of the heroic tragedies; and it can be relished by those who know not *Udolpho*, or *Ida of Athens*, or *The Novice of St. Dominick*, just as Tilburina still holds the theatre although no one present has heard of the writings parodied in *The Critic*. Barrett certainly sticks at nothing; his notes mischievously give the actual quotations that are woven into his text; and he profanely rifles not only Mrs. Radcliffe and her companions but *Werther* and Ossian and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and not only Miss Burney but Sterne; and Sir Francis Burdett, and Burke, and Johnson are alike his victims. His mimicry of the style of *The Lives of the Poets* is admirable. As in *Northanger Abbey*, the 'heroine' is a young lady whose head is turned by romances, some of which 'address the imagination alone, and . . . act upon the mind like inebriating stimulants'; whilst others, of Rousseau's species, 'indulge in a strain of overwrought and useless, if not pernicious, sentimentality.' Unlike Catherine Morland, she tells her own story, and indicates her own madness—for to madness she comes; a feat of narrative demanding more delicacy than Barrett possesses. The humour here is not a little jerky and ghastly. Cherry Wilkinson, who changes her name to Cherubina, deserts her old father, wanders alone to London, is gulled and fleeced by a cheap actor, who courts her in stage armour; dreams herself the heiress to a great mansion, and is cruelly humoured by its mistress for the pleasure of the guests; lives, a female Quixote, with a certain Jerry for her Sancho, in a ruined castle, which she defends with all the circumstance of chivalrous romance; runs through other tedious adventures, the satire thinning down into shapeless wisps; and is at last, after many real miseries, cured of her brainsickness and given back to her decent lover. Some frail, old-fashioned pieces of verse restore a certain perfume to the book, which is at any rate full of impetus and gaiety, and is by far the most comprehensive skit upon the fiction that was ceasing to be in vogue. It appeared aptly on the eve of the publication of *Waverley*. Romance, therefore, was to take a new and indefinite lease of life, despite these signs of revulsion. Barrett's 'address of the heroine to the reader' has a streak of Lucianic wit. The old fancy of the material,

winged life of human words, that are transported into some other sphere, is happily worked out. All the characters, so we hear, in any manuscript that is once completed,

> acquire the quality of creating a soul or spirit, which takes immediate flight, and ascends through the regions of air, till it arrives at the MOON ; where it is then embodied, and becomes a living creature : the precise counterpart, in mind and person, of its literary prototype. . . . It is not unusual to hear a mitred parrot screaming a political sermon, or a fashionable jay twittering a refined bravura. These birds, then, are our philosophers ; and so great is their value, that they sell for as much as your patriots.

Northanger Abbey was composed during the full tide of Mrs. Radcliffe's popularity, only four years after the appearance of *Udolpho,* but was not published till 1818. Even then, the protest of cool mocking sense against the extravagances of the school was by no means superfluous, as the half-jesting allusions in *Waverley* to ' romance ' are enough to show. The parody is so good and crafty, that little else now keeps the name of Mrs. Radcliffe alive in the general mind. Jane Austen does not object to the true supernatural ; she has nothing to do with it. But the whole furniture of the tale of terror is patiently counterfeited ; the heroine of mysterious birth, the midnight watch, the locked doors, and the secret scrolls ; and, above all, the trick of explaining the secrets away. Like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma, Northanger Abbey* is a novel of discipline; the comic undeceiving of Catherine Morland is the subject, or part of the subject. But Miss Austen strikes wider still. The enemy, once more, is sensibility, as fostered, in this case, by a diet of the wrong sort of fiction : she assails the conception of life, the glorification of the young lady, as set forth in romance. In the same breath, the methods of Miss Burney and Miss Edgeworth are indignantly vindicated. The book is thus full of indications of Miss Austen's literary tastes and preferences. In deliberate contrast with the scenes of Catherine's fancy, the actual world about her is of the pettiest. The drivel of the ladies, young and old, almost amounts to a parody of Miss Austen's own manner. The young parson Tilney, the mouthpiece of sarcasm and sense, is himself rather tedious ; but the amplest amends are made by the unforgettable John Thorpe, at whose college the consumption of port was ' four pints a day at the utmost.'

This chronicle of the novel may close, for the time, with a farce for the after-piece. One jest, imagined by a German

but produced in English, was translated into almost every western language. *Baron Munchausen's*[1] *Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia* (1785) is a little classic in its own venerable species, namely the tale of fabulous adventure, or *Lügendichtung*. It relates, in a few chapters, the experiences that the Baron told over his wine. There are less than two dozen yarns ; they include that of the crocodile who swallowed the head of the lion who jumped over the head of the Baron ; of the horse that was tied to the steeple in the snowstorm ; of the other horse (of classic parentage), which was cut in two, drank of the fountain, and was sown up again ; of the music frozen in the post-horn (also traditional) ; of the explosion of the flints inside the bear ; and of the cherry-tree that grew out of the stag's forehead. The Baron speaks correct, rather flat English, without raising his voice ; the dulness of his manner is part of the joke, as he explains each successive marvel by a greater one.

These anecdotes came from the brain, and also partly from the reading, of a singular Dousterswivelish personage, Rudolf Erich Raspe, whose own story is in keeping with his inventions. He translated Ossian, and wrote on Percy's *Reliques*, and was of Bürger's circle in Göttingen. Here he was the guest of the Freiherr von Münchhausen, locally known for drawing the longbow, whose name, heartlessly corrupted and utilised by Raspe, has passed into our language. This Raspe was learned in zoology and other sciences, and in the history of painting ; but unluckily stole some objects of price, and fled to England, where he was helped by Walpole ; and spent many of his days prospecting, ' salting,' and sinking mines. Within a few years his book was enlarged by unknown hands ; Bürger put the fifth edition into German ; and the seventh (1793) fixed the current text. The added matter is less amusing than Raspe's, but is full of contemporary allusions. Bruce's *Travels* (1790), which had provoked much derision, partly on account of the true stories they contained, are parodied ; the new pastime of ballooning is mocked at ; and the French Revolution is treated in the spirit of the modern cheap comic paper. Raspe's own chapters, however, give the reader a start which carries him through. It is reported that the real Münchhausen was ungrateful for his fame, and that he became morose and reticent.

CHAPTER VIII

PROSE OF DOCTRINE: SCOTTISH PHILOSOPHY, AND BURKE

I. Weakness of Britain during this period in pure philosophy. Reaction against Hume: Thomas Reid and 'common sense'; multiplication of 'original principles.' Dugald Stewart: lectures and discourses; his discussions on æsthetics; beauty and the imagination; love of literature. Reversion towards Hume: Thomas Brown; his analytic skill; connection with the English empirical school. Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses*: genius and the 'great style.'

II. Burke: his last phase (1780-1790-1797) an integral one; unity of his point of view. Sketch of his work before 1780: *The Sublime and Beautiful*; *Observations* and *Present Discontents*, their controlling idea. Zenith of his power: American speeches and epistles.

III. Burke: Indian speeches, and orations against Hastings. Limitations of his liberalism; in what sense a 'mystic.' 'Natural rights' and the 'social covenant.'

IV. Burke: writings, 1790-97. The *Reflections*; obsession with 1688; ignorance of causes of the French Revolution, prescience of its effects. Importance of the book in the evolution of political thought. *Letters on a Regicide Peace* and kindred writings: *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*.

V. Burke: his union of gifts as statesman, philosopher, and writer. Style: influence of Milton for good and ill. Inlaying of quotation and allusion; excesses. Burke's models for his sentence and period. Influence of Bolingbroke, doubtful. Examples of long, and of brief, sentence-structure; average scale of sentence, exemplified.

VI. Burke: rhetorical art and devices. Examples of figurative speech. Use of iteration and echo; the passage on 'peace.' Amplification; and modes of irony. Comparisons and metaphors, their variety and ferocity. Expansion of metaphors. Burke's cadence and rhythm; example.

I

It is time to turn awhile from the literature of invention to that of thought. On most of our philosophic writers from 1780 to 1830 one reflection is inevitable. Burke apart, they belong to a second-rate, insular period of speculation, while the poets, the novelists, and the critics belong to a first-rate, original period of art. There is no such mental movement[1] as that which quickens the Germany of Kant, Fichte, and Schopenhauer. Bentham's greatness lies in applied philosophy;

the greatness of Coleridge lies in poetry and criticism and in the fertile application of imported ideas. Such a poverty of atmosphere reacts visibly upon the poets themselves, much to their detriment; and especially before 1800. We can hardly imagine so great a man as Blake living in so curious a mental welter in France, Germany, or Italy. Nor are Wordsworth and Shelley in real contact with the European mind. Burke himself, with all his weight and power, illustrates the same deficiency. He detests first principles, derides pure analysis, and uses 'metaphysician' as a term of contumely.

The movement of sheer criticism, as already noted, was fulfilled in Hume, who reduced experience to a series of 'impressions,' and who further reduced two of these impressions —namely our sense of a causal tie between the rest of our impressions, and our belief that there is a permanent ground for them all within ourselves—to an illusion. The world-famous result of this process was to startle the mind of Kant from his 'dogmatic sleep,' and to drive him to construct his critical philosophy. But the knowledge of Kant's works reached our shores very slowly; and meanwhile, at home, in Hume's native country, began what may be called the insular revulsion against Hume's principles. This movement issued in the works of the 'Scottish school,' whose creed was named by its adherents, though not too happily, the 'philosophy of common sense.' In the hands of Thomas Reid,[1] the founder, this philosophy is pre-revolutionary in spirit as well as in date. His *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1768) is much expanded and explained in his lectures, collected under the titles *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785) and *Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind* (1788). These later works of Reid's are less dry and compact than the earlier; they approach nearer to literature, and have a plainness and clearness not overmuch diversified by professional ornament. Reid has now and then a happy illustrative wit, as in his chapter on the 'Train of Thought,' which, he is concerned to show, is not a mere succession of 'ideas' or impressions, but is necessarily related to a subject who can select and attend to them:

> We seem to treat the thoughts that present themselves to the fancy in crowds as a great man treats those that attend his levee. They are all ambitious of his attention; he goes round the circle, bestowing a bow upon one, a smile upon another; asks a short question of a third; while a fourth is wanted for a particular conference; and the great part have no particular mark of attention,

but go as they came. It is true he can give no mark of his attention to those who were not there; but he has a sufficient number for making choice and distinction.

Reid's essay on Taste, which involves an analysis of the beautiful and the sublime, qualities which he argues reside in 'things' and not merely in our minds, is full of acute passages, and some of his remarks about the need of 'grandeur in the subject' are oddly prophetic of Matthew Arnold, and also are distinguished by much 'common sense.'

The philosophy of Reid and his successors thus represents in the first instance a reaction from the spirit of destructive criticism to concrete experience, to which they appeal for the new foundations of philosophy. But they do not, like Kant, start from experience in order to dig down into its presuppositions; on the contrary, they find ready given in experience a number of original principles in logic, mathematics, psychology, æsthetic, and ethics; and they say that these are ultimate and inexplicable, and that modern thought since Descartes has wasted its force, and has only ended in scepticism, by trying to explain them. Such principles Reid sometimes calls 'common sense,' sometimes by other names; and he spends much of his time in the work of descriptive psychology, which elucidates their nature and scope. The study of mind was really advanced in this way; and the whole procedure, which has often been wrongly called a kind of suicide of philosophy, is full of historic import. Reid (though his followers narrow the list) is prone quietly to assume as ultimate all those phenomena that he fails to explain. But he is really working towards a true vindication of that rational element in human experience, which Hume had explained away. The assumptions of ordinary life and language, if not a pure illusion, need to be accounted for, and it was a service to restate them, and along with them the problem of philosophy.

Reid thus takes his share in that mental process of the time —the return from pure criticism to the sifted results of experience and learning—which, as we have seen (Ch. I.), permeates literature. In his case, however, it is not so much history, or social and economic phenomena, or the political inheritance of his country, that he reasserts, as the contents of any and every man's consciousness. In this he was true, after all, to the traditional temper of British philosophy from Bacon to Locke, although he seems to repudiate the tradition. Much of the value of his work consists in his

review of the actual facts of mind. His reconstruction does not go very far, and the consciousness which he examines is that of the educated, respectable, and orthodox person. The new ideas of Rousseau, or of the French ideologists, or of Kant, do not appear to have reached him. Hence he was unaware of the strength of the enemy, or of the scope of those distinctions between the 'reason' and the 'understanding,' or the 'fancy' and the 'imagination,' which Coleridge spent his days in seeking, not very effectually, to expound.

The conclusions of Reid were explained, popularised, and qualified by Dugald Stewart[1] (1753-1828), who enjoyed much honour in his own time. His contribution to ideas is admitted to be slight; and much of his once admired eloquence, with all its lucidity, enthusiasm, and range of illustration, is rather too flat-footed and long-winded to rank as literature. It was first heard in the lecture-room, and the audience included many of the best Scotsmen of the day, including Scott and Jeffrey, as well as English Whigs or Liberals like Brougham and Sydney Smith. Stewart was thus an active and honourable middleman of culture, who kept speculation and discussion alive during a dead season. In his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1792, 1814, 1827) can be found his general system of metaphysic and psychology; in the *Philosophical Essays* (1810) his most easy and pointed writing; in the *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers* his ethic; and, in his dissertation, written for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, his sketch of the history of modern thought. He is noticeably unappreciative of Kant, who seems to him to be repeating old answers to old questions in a special 'jargon.' Stewart also wrote somewhat heavy memoirs of Adam Smith, Robertson, and Reid.

One of Stewart's best traits is his constant effort to light up his philosophy by elegant examples, drawn from the travellers, poets, and novelists. His lectures are variegated with quotations, and show a real love of letters. This habit profits him best in the field of æsthetic. It has been shown already (Ch. I.) how he analyses the notion of the 'picturesque.' He has a genuine feeling for beauty in nature, art, and poetry, and tries to give a reasoned account of that feeling. Somewhat insular, and seemingly unaware of Lessing's or Kant's utterances on the subject, he nevertheless goes far beyond Reid, and also beyond his own successors of the English and Scottish schools. There is nothing in Mackintosh, Brown, Hamilton, or James Mill, so comprehensive or so much to

the point as the chapter on Imagination in the *Elements*, or the pages on the Beautiful and the Sublime in the *Philosophical Essays*. Like Alison (see p. 14 *ante*) he has a keen sense of the multiplicity of factors involved in the perception of a beautiful thing—of the bundle of graces that are covered by the girdle of Venus. He is on the brink of stating the distinction asserted by Coleridge and Wordsworth between the purposes of science and those of poetry; and, when he observes that the poet 'addresses the understanding only as a vehicle of pleasure,' it is evident that the day of eighteenth-century didactics is setting. He also gives a parting kick to the notion that poetry is concerned chiefly with abstract ideas. The pleasure that the poet conveys, we hear, 'will in general be found proportionate to the beauty and liveliness of the images he suggests.' Stewart's account of taste as an acquired faculty, not identical with mere sensibility, but involving reason and reflection, and yet for all that prompt, instantaneous, and unconscious in its judgments, is admirably worked out. He describes the connoisseur as one whose taste has been moulded by a long commerce with masterpieces; and adds, shrewdly, that there is likely to be something wrong in a work which *only* the connoisseur can admire. He profits by Longinus, cares next to nothing for the 'rules' of criticism, and anticipates Charles Lamb's objection to seeing the tragedies of Shakespeare performed; although he applies this objection to comedy, saying that the actor can only disturb the picture that our fancy has formed of Falstaff. Reading Dugald Stewart, we feel that the path is made ready for Coleridge, for genius observant of itself, and for a philosophy of poetry that is worthy of the poetry it accompanies.

Dugald Stewart's pupil, Thomas Brown[1] (1778-1820), was also his partner and successor in the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, and continued the tradition of academic eloquence. His discourses were still more popular, in part because his rhetorical decorations, which come thickly, were more commonplace. There are many graces of the class-room; and the numerous quotations are of the old-fashioned sort, drawn from Thomson, Akenside, Beattie, and Pope; but they were commended by Brown's elocution and earnestness. His *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* were posthumously published, and reached a nineteenth edition in thirty-one years—a surprising vogue for a philosophical work. But the last edition was in 1860; and Brown, though his fine analytic faculty is always mentioned with respect, retains

chiefly a historical interest. His early *Inquiry into the Nature of Cause and Effect*, which in its final form appeared in 1818, is an excellent example of his power, and still a real whetstone for the wit; it is hard reasoning; with little ornament, it is both clear and subtle, and one of the best examples of philosophical style during this period.

Brown, indeed, in spite of his flowers, is more precise than Stewart both in argument and in language, and makes more positive contributions to the study of consciousness. He represents a reaction from the school of Reid, and his tendency is to simplify rather than to multiply the original and unexplained principles of the mind. His *Inquiry* into causation is largely a return towards Hume, whose theory, in the first edition (1804), it is confined to examining. Causation is only invariable succession; but the belief in such succession is intuitive and original. In the end Brown manages to conciliate his belief in God and miracles with his partial adhesion to Hume. In his *Lectures* he pleads for a rigidly scientific treatment of mental phenomena, or, as he puts it, of 'intellectual physics'; extends, with great acumen, the analysis of perception and of association, which he prefers to call suggestion; and throughout sounds the note, so distinctive of the English school, of nominalism—that is, he continually inquires how far different words (such as consciousness, feeling, etc.) really signify separate things; a tendency long since familiar in Hobbes, and carried very far by James Mill and his son. It is to this southern group of Benthamites that Brown really attaches in method, though his conclusions in theology and ethics, unlike theirs, are orthodox. We accordingly find him, in the next generation, assailed by Hamilton and defended by John Stuart Mill. He remained, however, in a kind of half-way house, and, dying early, hardly matured his speculative gift.

All these Scottish philosophers, including Sir William Hamilton, whose publications begin in 1829 and lie beyond our limits, have the stamp of the teacher and shepherd. Most of their bequest is in the form of lectures given to young students; a feature that determines their literary form in many ways. They are clear, and usually diffuse; their chapters are discourses of an hour's length; and they seek, in varying measure, to hold the audience by declamation, quotation, example, and appeal. Bentham and his circle, some of whom are noticed in the next chapter, are not under the same necessity, and do not write as if for listeners.

Burke, however, does so, and likewise his friend Reynolds,[1] whom it is right to name here before reaching Burke. The fifteenth and last of Sir Joshua's *Discourses* to the students of the Royal Academy was delivered in 1790, two years before his death; the series began in 1769. Ten years earlier, in *The Idler* (Oct. 20 and Nov. 10, 1759), appears that worship of typical and general forms, the representation of which, in Reynolds's eyes, is the aim of the 'grand style':

> The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great, and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal Nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth and a minute exactness in the detail, as I may say, of Nature modified by accident.

It is this point of view, worked out in the *Discourses*, which moved the wrath of Blake, whose cult of 'minutely appropriate particulars' has already been recorded, and who observed that 'to generalise is to be an idiot.' On one side, certainly, Reynolds inclines to the same superstitions as the philosopher in *Rasselas*, with his passion for 'generals' in poetry; and it is a common remark, that the big subject-pictures of Reynolds in 'the grand style' led him away from his gift; for his portraits, which are his true achievement, are 'particular' enough. Still, as a critic, he is more of the new age than of the old. His quest is beauty, and just as his aim in portraiture is to depict the essence, the universal element, of the character of Johnson or Goldsmith, so he is vowed, as sincerely as Blake, to the gospel of execution. He is all for genius, and leaves mechanical rules to apprentices: but he anticipates (1774) the thought of Coleridge, that genius, so far from being lawless, evolves its own law in the act of creation:

> What we now call Genius, begins, not where rules, abstractedly taken, end; but where known, vulgar, and trite rules no longer have any place. It must of necessity be, that even works of Genius, like every other fact, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules; it cannot be by chance, that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and such as are called men of Genius, work, are either such as they discover by their own peculiar observations, or of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words.

Sir Joshua, in his tempered way, has the true spirit of Longinus, by whom he assuredly profits. The pronouncement that 'the great end of art is to strike the imagination'; the criticism of the dialogue between Duncan and Banquo

before Macbeth's castle; the description of artistic sagacity or intuition, as 'the result of the accumulated experience of our whole life'; and the advice to the student to 'compare your efforts with those of some great master,'—these things are all in the manner of the *De Sublimitate*, and breathe its quickening spirit. The tributes to common sense and cool reason, which are interspersed amongst these higher sayings, are of less note; they are, as it were, official epitaphs on the age that is passing.

II

The place of Edmund Burke[1] (1729-97) in the new literature has been already hinted (Ch. I.). He embodies, more powerfully than any one, the mental tendencies and changes that are seen gathering force through the eighteenth century. A volume of positive knowledge, critically sifted and ascertained; a constructive vision of the past and its institutions; the imagination, under this guidance, everywhere at play; all these elements unite in Burke. His main field is political philosophy, of which he is the centre in his own day and for long afterwards; only Bentham and Bentham's school contest that position, and many thinkers who are not Burke's disciples derive from him by revulsion. His favourite form is oratory, uttered or written. His medium is prose, and the work of his later years, alone, outweighs all contemporary prose in power; with much to spare, if it is put into a scale like the verses in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. The other members of the 'Literary Club,' Johnson and Gibbon, Goldsmith and Reynolds, died before him; their labours are like monuments of an elder race, planted on the borders of the new, and seldom concern the present survey. Burke lived and wrote till 1797. The works of his last seven years, in which he delivered himself on French affairs, form a final, integral phase, prepared for and explained by the ten years preceding. Yet his whole body of production has the unity of some large cathedral, whose successive accretions reveal the natural growth of a single mind, without any change or essential break; although, to those who ignore the signs of transition, the beginning and the end may seem incongruous. Burke has often been taunted with the seeming change of creed, that marks his utterances after 1790; ever since, upon the appearance of his *Reflections*, the Whig Dr. Parr hung his portrait, in disgust, upside down. But to Burke himself this change was only a shifting of the emphasis. If the verdict of history has borne out his opinion of the American

War, and of the duty we owe to India, while it has by no means approved his whole presentment of the Revolution, the reason lies less in any inconsistency on Burke's part, than in a consistency over-rigid and entire, which kept him from seeing that the creed which fitted one set of conditions was too inflexible for another. If he is false to any tenet of his own, it is to that which asserts the wisdom of a large expediency and an elastic judgment in matters political. We can at any rate see the process of his opinions, which, as expounded in his *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, assures us that in his own eyes he was faithful to himself. It is chiefly from this standpoint, of the essential unity of Burke's thinking, that the writings of his youth and prime may here be touched on. They also show the growth of his art up to its highest and most characteristic stage.

One of them, his *Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*[1] (1756 and 1765), has a special interest. It throws light on his modes of rhetoric, and on the poetical cast of his nature. He works with the blunt psychology of the day; but his rough firm hold on the facts of sensibility is striking enough. He says absurd things about love and the feelings, but to his own feelings he is true, and he has the courage of his crudities. His account of sympathy and of the emotional effect of tragedy is a genuine addition to Aristotle's. 'We have a delight, and that no small one, in the real pains and distresses of others.' 'Terror is a passion that always produces delight when it does not press too close.' He notes, before Lessing, a point that Lessing missed, when he says that no painter could express the effect of Virgil's words, 'quos ipse sacraverat ignes.' Burke likes bold and splendid effects; adores the higher rhetoric which was to become his own; and is humanly awake to the difference between admiration and love in matters of art; founding, indeed, on this difference, and driving too far, his distinction between the sublime and the beautiful. He insists, however, in the style of the time, that words convey ideas and symbols rather than real images; and this is hardly true of his own words, for he is the most concrete of English reasoners and orators.

The golden voice of Burke's wisdom is heard between 1769 and 1781; it was then that his political conceptions were in the fullest harmony. He found the moulds for his three favoured forms of utterance, the pamphlet, the letter, and the speech. To say that he is an orator through them all is but half the truth; for even in his public speeches there are the

tones of soliloquy, of the reasoner who is satisfying himself and is alone with his principles. In Burke's *Observations* (1769) and his *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770) his real temper and mode of address begin to emerge. His utterances *On the Relief of Dissenters* (1773) and on the Acts of Uniformity (1772) are governed by the same ideas. His experience in the first Rockingham administration gives the ply to his convictions. He is already sure that politics are not a science; and that they 'ought to be adjusted not to human reasonings, but to human nature, of which the reason is but a part, and by no means the greatest part.' Piety, the reverence for the past, the sense of an inherited social bond, must also be taken into account; and these afford no formula. High expediency—what has been proved by the past to be good under the circumstances and in the long run—is the only canon. But there are also guiding clues; one of which is that in cases of dispute the presumption is in favour of the people, while another is that 'the constitution stands in a nice equipoise,' and must not lean too much towards either the prescriptive or the innovating element. The keystone of the English polity, to Burke, is religion; and it is not confined to the English establishment, though this is vital to the state. He has a kindness for the old faith, but none for the infidels, who are 'outlaws of the Constitution.' The *Observations* and the *Thoughts* are addressed to a confused and evil emergency, and do not deal with affairs of the widest scope. But already the characteristics of Burke's thought and style appear, as well as his profound conversance with constitutional history, finance, and affairs. There is a constant reference to general truths, as in the famous defence of Party. The maxims that come into play go far beyond the occasion. There is a perpetual ground-swell of passion, embanked and held in check, but ever breaking out into sombre irony and sometimes into figure; but metaphors and other tropes are not yet very frequent.

In the American orations and letters the mind and art of Burke are seen at their highest. They include the speeches *On American Taxation* (1774) and *On Conciliation with America* (1775), the intervening address on the Bristol election, where Burke vindicates the independence of the member in the presence of his constituents; the *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, a noble description and defence of Burke's Whiggism; and the impassioned and Miltonic speech made at Bristol in 1780 before declining the poll, as well as the brief oration given

afterwards. These works may be thought of as forming a single, though not a preconceived, composition, in which Burke's philosophy unfolds under the heat generated by the greatest of imperial problems. The speech *On American Taxation* is a varied and mighty piece of pleading. It is a mixture of narrative, retrospect, refutation, and hard argument, enlivened with a series of those character-portraits of which the last great master had been Clarendon. Grenville and Chatham are described to the House that had not so long since heard their voices. The speech is a great *crescendo* of denunciation and reasoned warning against the criminal exercise of the legal right to tax America. In the speech *On Conciliation* the theme is greater still. Goethe was pleased when an Englishman called his genius 'panoramic'; the word applies well to Burke's. Reading him, we can better believe that the long orations of antiquity can really have been delivered. In the art of unfolding and amplifying, Burke is the rival of those ancients. His architectural skill is supreme, and reminds us of other feats of the same kind in different regions—of the section in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, 'Of Commonwealth,' or of Hooker's overture 'Of Law,'—works on which the mind can rest satisfied in the same way. The overture, not too long, leading to the main thesis, 'the proposition is peace'; the swift view, as from a high place, of the colonial population, trade, temper, and religion; the definition of the duties of empire, and the scornful dismissal of 'what a lawyer tells me I *may* do'; the sixfold resolution in favour of 'taxation by grant'; the appeal to the ties of blood, and the final *sursum corda!* all this union of heat and light, of righteousness and statesmanship, could not have been achieved, even by a greater genius, on any issue less great. Much, in these cases, 'depends on the subject'; and there has not since been another continent in dispute. In his *Addresses* to the king and to the colonists Burke clears himself and his friends of any complicity in the offence of maltreating America. The first of these addresses is one of the most splendid and self-controlled of his shorter works.

III

Between 1780 and 1790 Burke gave most of his mind to India. His speech, in the former year, for *Economical Reform*, directed against extravagance and corruption in the civil service, is an admirable piece of irony, seemingly sedate, but savage underneath. On the East his first considerable oration

was made in favour of Fox's *East India Bill* (1783); but he had already drafted the ninth and eleventh reports of the committees upon Indian affairs. The speech, though its actual proposal failed, not undeservedly, has a twofold interest. First of all Burke applies to India nearly the same political principle as he had applied to America. He admits the legal right of the East India Company to govern, as he had admitted the legal right of England to tax. But this right is part of a trust; it is revocable if used perversely, and not for the good of the people; Parliament may resume it. Commercial monopoly can never be one of the eternal 'rights of men.' Such words were sure to be cited against Burke himself when he criticised the confiscatory doings of the National Assembly. His Whiggism still kept him on the popular side, but India gave new wings to his oratorical genius. Macaulay has well described the effect of these Eastern studies on Burke's imagination. They gave it something which America could never give, and on which it could work, certain of an inexhaustible stimulus. His Irish warmth of vision carried him into a different world from that of even the high-minded and highly trained Anglo-Indian. Together with Sir William Jones, Burke did more than all men to bring home to English readers the nature of the East. He was less moved even by the colour and pageant, by the strangeness and the riches of that remote world, than by its appeal to the sense of bigness, for which it is his supreme gift to find expression. Antiquity and spaciousness, number and area and mass, kindle his fancy. And above all is the sense that *omnia exeunt in mysterium*. His words can never be obsolete:

> Our Indian government[1] is in its best state a grievance. . . . All these circumstances are not, I confess, very favourable to the idea of our attempting to govern India at all. But there we are; there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer; and we must do the best we can in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty.

The whole of Burke, or Burke at his best, is there: the doctrine of expediency, of making the best of things, is to him mysteriously sanctioned and divinely true; and it consists with a wrath against oppression and misdoing, which he can in no case judge to be expedient. His pictures of the officials, 'birds of prey and of passage,' of Benares and of the Begums, and his praises of Francis and of Fox, are among the capital examples of his eloquence, as yet hardly tinged with that over-

strain and hoarseness which were to attend and punish, ten years later, the unsettling of his saner judgment. These decorations are rarer, though not less gorgeous, in the next of his important attacks on the government of India, the *Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts* (1785). This, perhaps the most masterly of Burke's expositions of finance, is also charged high with passion and imagery. The famous account of Hyder Ali swooping on the Carnatic marks the extreme limit to which rhetoric of this kind can successfully go, and triumph, without toppling over. Indeed, as it stands, it would exceed were it not true ; invented, it would revolt us ; nor should it be read by itself in a book of extracts. It is one of the streaks of colour in a close-woven fabric, intricate, technical, and historical, a great feat of pleading and reasoning. Many of the same qualities are found in the orations impeaching Hastings, which occupied ten days in 1788, and nine days, on the reply, in 1794. Hard argument, fired with lofty and terrific but monotonous moral invective, is the staple of these famous charges, which drew from Burke the most sustained effort, and afforded him the most splendid and scenic appearance, of his whole life. There are, however, few of those noble halts and pauses which mark the American speeches, where he rises above the moment to lay down high enduring principles of statecraft or political science ; and there are few of the set and finished pictures in which he excelled. The loftiest interlude is that on the nature of arbitrary power, in the fourth day's impeachment ; here Burke's vision of human duty, as prior to the claims or the birth of the individual, and imposed by the divine power which prescribes the mysterious tie of the social fabric, rises to its highest. Posterity distinguishes his attacks on Hastings, which have to be qualified not only in their detail but in their total effect, from his exposure of the system by which India was ruled and of its iniquities ; and honours Burke, more than any single man, with the credit of having made that system impossible. Before the long trial was over, his mind had been drawn off by an even greater theme.

It is in some of Burke's lesser compositions that we can best trace the limitations of his liberalism, and prepare to judge of the *Reflections* and their sequel. In 1773 he had spoken for the relief of dissenters. In 1782 he made an admirable protest, happily soon to be superfluous, against the worst disabilities laid on Irish Catholics. But in 1792, haunted by the spectre of a Jacobin tyranny in England, he was to speak

against a petition for absolving Unitarians from the test. This body, associated in the person of Priestley and others with radical ideas, he treated as a political faction. His attachment to the establishment never wavered; it was to him part of the order of providence. There could be no doubt how he would view the expropriation of the French church and the dismissal of the national religion. Nor had he ever the radical faith in increased representation. As his best exponent[1] has observed:

> Neither now nor ever had Burke any real conception of a polity for England other than government by the territorial aristocracy in the interests of the nation at large, and especially in the interests of commerce.

His speech *On Representation* (1782) is not a democratic deliverance. Prescription, and the wisdom of generations, and the folly of hasty change, are principles that he does not find too big for his conclusion against numerical counting of heads, or the necessary rule of the majority. He may have been wrong: but it was not incongruous in him to revile the constitution of France in 1790.

Burke has been called a mystic, and his pamphlets on France are full of the spirit which that word is meant to describe; indeed, it runs through all he wrote. It is something, perhaps, of a misnomer. There is nothing Oriental or pantheistic about him, nor does he seek for lonely and ecstatic revelations of the divine. His 'mysticism' amounts, no doubt, to something more than a sense of an overruling providence, and a belief, in Hegel's phrase, that 'the history of the world is the judgment on the world.' This he firmly holds, and one famous sentence has a modern ring:

> The individual is foolish. The multitude for the moment is foolish . . . but the species is wise, and when time is given to it, as a species, it almost always acts right.

This comes, in the long run, to judging by the event; and it would be cheap and easy to turn such a maxim against Burke's verdict upon the Revolution in France. But it is not exactly mystical, except in the sense that it rests upon a feeling that the ultimate sanctions of personal and national duty must remain unexplained. It is the new philosophic and poetic instinct applied to 'the frame and contexture of society.' In the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, Burke pleads that the individual is born to a number of 'prior obligations' to which he never formally consents:

Dark and inscrutable[1] are the ways by which we come into the world. The instincts which give rise to this mysterious process of nature are not of our making. But out of physical causes unknown to us, perhaps unknowable, arise moral duties, which, as we are able perfectly to comprehend, we are bound indispensably to perform.

Here, once more, the imagination, nourished by the vision of the long past, and learned in the instances of history, is seen following its clues back to the verge of darkness, and rebuilding the conception of human obligation. It is this tone that distinguishes Burke from the political thinkers of his century.

Such an order of the world Burke accepts as divinely arranged, and invisible in its ends as in its origins; but there his mysticism stops. It is easy to see how the French Revolution would appear to him to violate such an order, and to sacrifice all the conquests of culture and piety. He may seem over-fond of identifying 'the sovereign reason of the world' with the feudal order, or at least with the settlement of 1688; but we grow accustomed to his way of laying down wide impressive principles, which may be misapplied, but whose truth and value are independent of his minor premiss.

The immense curve of Burke's political thinking cannot be followed here, but one of its focal points may be referred to. This is the conception of 'natural rights,'[2] or 'the rights of man,' a formula that has affected the world in a way only comparable with the influence of the great theological doctrines. It shaped states, it shed blood, it maddened multitudes. It owed its motive power, no doubt, to the sufferings and abuses for the dislodgment of which it furnished a battle-cry. It was not a mere notion of the schools. Burke's attitude to this conception is therefore of interest. It might seem that he held it as an article of faith when he spoke of America or of India, but abandoned it when he turned to France. After 1790 he certainly turned his batteries upon it. Was he inconsistent here?

The question is complicated by another conception now obsolete, that of the 'social covenant'; the alleged express arrangement, beginning at an unknown point of time, between the governors and the governed. Burke often wrote under the sway of this conception; as though, when organised society came into being, the rights which had only existed before in the ideal and moral sense, were now guaranteed in

fact by a bargain. Such rights, then, seemed to be assured to the people, unless there were a breach of faith by the rulers. But suppose such a breach; had the people then a right to 'resume their rights,' as the revolutionaries declared? If so, what was a sufficient cause? Who, moreover, was to decide? Burke seems to vary in his answers. Sometimes he implies that the bargain could only be undone, on the popular side, under extreme necessity. At other times he speaks as if such rights were more or less of a fiction, and 'the whole organisation of government a consideration of convenience.' At others he explains the rights of men away, though admitting their existence:

> In the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refraction and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction.

After 1790, his hatred of mere abstract considerations, and of 'metaphysics,' prevails. In the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, he again wholly scouts the claims of the bare numerical majority to form so momentous a decision as that involved in a 'resumption' of power. The truth seems to be that he held much the same principles as ever, but refused to stretch them so as to include a much greater and more difficult case than he had yet encountered. Nothing in English or even in American history put his popular sympathies or political principles to so terrible a trial as the French Revolution.

IV

The compositions of Burke's last seven years are writings, not speeches; and they are perhaps the worse written for not being speeches. They did not, like the American orations, depend upon his power of holding the attention of tired or angry men; they did not call out Burke's architectural faculty. The *Reflections on the Revolutions in France* (1790) are in some disorder; the thoughts spring out of one another, and not out of a plan held from the first before the mind. They take fire as they succeed, like a train of powder, which blazes round and round the original victims,[1] Dr. Price and his friends, with a disproportionate fury. The argument of Price's sermon, that the people has a right to elect its governors and 'cashier them for misconduct,' is treated as a blasphemous parody of

the principles of 1688. The English Revolution is an obsession to Burke, and his greatest difficulty. It was a necessity, and it was irregular; yet, once established, its settlement is something 'in just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world.' But out of this vicious circle he rises to a superb confession of faith. Society is, indeed, not a legal covenant, but 'a partnership, not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born.' It is this breach with the past, this mortgaging of the future, that horrifies him. All the satiric and pathetic pictures in his book take their colouring in the end from this sentiment. A pack of philosophers, lawyers, politicians, and adventurers have overthrown all the sacred, hardly won equilibrium of society; mad anarchy is masquerading as the voice of 'reason' and of human 'rights.' The world created by prescription, law, ordinance, and piety is gone; and 'France is now plunged into the antagonist world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow.'

Burke's ignorance of the primary causes of the Revolution has often been noticed, as well as his engrossment with English precedent and practice; and the retort of Mackintosh [1] has the weight of Burke's own best sayings:

> Great revolutions are too immense for technical formality. All the sanction that can be hoped for in such events is the voice of the people, however informally and irregularly expressed. This cannot be pretended to have been wanting in France.

Burke never saw that the French nation desired that the old order should go, and that such a desire was not caused, but only made articulate, by the theories of the *philosophes*. He did not see that the existing economic, social, and political conditions could only be reformed by an explosion. Once, at the close of the year 1791, in his *Thoughts on French Affairs*, he seems to think it possible he may be wrong. But this was only a mood, and to the last he was confirmed in his diagnosis by the fulfilment of his forecast, in which he showed himself a prophet indeed, that the end would be a despotic establishment without a parallel in history. The *Reflections*, with all this, is a mighty book; for Burke is kindled by the occasion, as never before, to expound the central thought of his political philosophy, which he had all his life cherished but had only uttered incidentally. Society and law, he holds, are not arrangements founded on a bargain, but a living web of sacred obligations by which each generation is bound to the last and to the next. He thus

starts not from the individual and his dues, but from the community and its experience. This conception of the social fabric affected all subsequent thinking. At the time, events in France seemed to Burke nothing but a violation of his fundamental tenet.

With all their fury, the *Reflections* do not leave us with the sense that the writer has lost hold upon himself. We still feel that at need he could and would have made his American speeches over again. This is hardly the case when we turn to the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, which are hoarse with a wrath that is blinded, because it seems to itself to be justified, by events. The old judicial wisdom is not wholly lost, but it comes like a break of clear deep sky in the intervals of a tornado. The Revolution has now become an affair of huger omen; it is an international infection; an 'armed doctrine,' which is 'separated from religion,' pervading several countries, and forming 'a principle of union between the partisans in each.' The war is now between 'the partisans of the ancient, civil, moral, and political order in Europe,' and an anarchical sect. This sect is active in England also; and it is agreed that Burke's mental vision became bloodshot with dread of a Jacobin upheaval at home. He is no longer a student of facts and conditions, his conclusions are fixed, the historic judgment no longer inhibits or guides his emotions, and the fulness with which some of his fears have been justified has demoralised his power to distinguish. But the *Letters on a Regicide Peace* are by no means without instruction. Burke does not altogether stand still. He analyses in the first letter the paltry occasions that set great events in motion—'a child, a girl at the door of an inn'—in the spirit of Pascal. He describes the influence of the *philosophes* correctly, but insufficiently. He discerns clearly why the King failed and perished. In the third *Letter*, posthumously published, there is a luminous view of the industrial revolution in England; and a survey, of the old comprehensive sort, of all the nations of Europe and their situation is given in order to show that the demand made for peace in 1797 appeals to the interest of none of them.

Before these letters came two briefer writings, the *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791) and *Thoughts on French Affairs* (1791), which are the last in which Burke throughout retains some of the philosophic temper. The notices in the *Letter* of Rousseau and his creed admit us to Burke's conception of domestic piety and order, though they misrepresent Rousseau. At the close, when he replies to the inquiry of his correspondent, 'What, after all, would he have

done ? ' he has nothing to say except that he is not on the spot, does not know the situation, and has no advice to offer. He can only say, in effect, that the French ought to have managed their revolution like Englishmen. The most notable feature in these *Thoughts* is the definition of the political dogma which he fears will spread to other nations ; and this is the most succinct expression of the opposite of Burke's creed. It is

> that the majority, told by the head, of the taxable people in every country, is the perpetual, natural, unceasing, indefeasible sovereign ; that this majority is perfectly master of the form, as well as the administration, of the state ; and that the magistrates, under whatever names they are called, are only functionaries to obey the orders (general as laws, or particular as decrees) which that majority may make ; that this is the only natural government ; that all others are tyranny and usurpation.

The Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs (1791), and the shorter tract on *The Conduct of the Minority* (1793), complete Burke's later exposition of his political religion. The former no man can read without seeing that Burke himself felt there was no violence at all in his seeming apostasy, with which he was reproached by Paine and Priestley and scores of others. He may have erred in his diagnosis of France ; but he constructs a constitutional theory which fairly covers his whole career. Verbal inconsistencies were, and can be, easily collected ; yet the edifice of Burke's doctrine holds together, and has lasted long. He is more than a voice and leader of Whiggism ; he established one of its greater types. He is the ancestor of those who would applaud the institution of some tempered representative government of the British kind, by peaceful means, in Turkey or Finland. But he is also the perpetual voice and oracle of those who believe in the rule of a 'natural aristocracy,' founded on hereditary rank and property, over a not unduly represented people, and linked with a national church enshrining the most respectable sources of piety and consolation. This Whiggism is not dead, and Burke is its philosopher.

V

Burke's authority was highest during the last ten years of his life, for he had behind him the whole force of the reaction which he was a chief instrument in creating. He never had the conduct of affairs, but he was the intellectual head of a majority, and won the prestige of a seer whose omens seemed

to have come too true. He received many honours, and the *Reflections* became a text-book of conservatism abroad. Even greater than his authority was (to use a term of physics) his 'displacement,' or the wave of thought and passion that he threw into disturbance. He was immensely provocative of literature, as the next chapter will show. For a long while we can tell the colouring of a man's politics by his estimate of Burke, as the examples of Mackintosh and Wordsworth, of Coleridge and Hazlitt, of Paine and Godwin, are enough to prove. He is generally judged by these writers on the strength of his later works; in which, it is true, we feel, even at the worst, that we are listening to a great voice. But his lasting claims as a political thinker and author rest more surely upon his earlier labours. It is in the American and Indian speeches, in the addresses to the king and the *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, that the real Burke is heard.

In each of his peculiar gifts he may have been excelled, but never in their union. He has much of the equipment of the historian, the legist, and the financier, and his grasp of particulars is strong and almost savage. His practical instinct and prescience as a statesman have at many points been approved by history. Above all, it is his power of referring every issue to some general truth, in the light of which he justifies his conclusions, that distinguishes and crowns his genius. He is also one of the masters of form and language in his own field, ranking with Bacon or Machiavelli, and one of the princes of English prose.

In his combination of oratory and philosophy he stands nearest to Bacon, who gives the same impression of power unwasted and only half-disclosed. This is true, at least, of all that Burke wrote before 1790. But Bacon's mind is cool, his zeal is for the expansion of knowledge, and he is little tempted to let himself go. Burke is passionate, and reins himself in. The consciousness of the great affairs in which he has been a part, and of the great ideas which are a part of himself, is the muffled accompaniment to all he writes; and it is this, as much as his sheer strength of mind, that gives him his superiority over his adversaries, so that he is remembered while they are not. There is none of the thin eager play of mere brain, or of mere enthusiasm; there is a 'commingling of blood and judgment' everywhere. The resonance and depth of a great nature are presupposed in such a style as Burke's. Its variety is not unlike Bacon's; the words sometimes roll on in long undulations, or spread like a flood, and

sometimes are chopped into shorter waves. But Burke's style derives from Milton rather than from Bacon, and the influence of Milton was not all for good. The uncouth shrieking similes and sallies of rabid irony, in the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, owe too much to the author of *Eikonoklastes* and *Colasterion*. But the bursts of sublimity—in Burke's own meaning of the sublime, as something that depends on the mingled delight and pain inspired by terrible things—are Miltonic also, and sometimes even convey Milton's phrases.

In the speeches there is a good deal of quotation from Virgil and Horace, of the old parliamentary kind which disappeared with Gladstone. In the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, after the noble picture of the English polity and its permanence, the lines *Dum domus Aeneae* come down like an avalanche, and any other conclusion would sound weak after them. But the inlaid work of allusion and verbal reminiscence is more curious. Once a whole page[1] is decked with phrases from *Henry V.* and *Paradise Lost*: 'the highest heaven of invention,' 'the swelling scene,' 'impatient dogs of war,' 'the port of Mars,' 'the minister of vengeance,' the 'grim Moloch of regicide'—where the language of heroic verse seems to Burke no more than adequate for the occasion. Elsewhere, the harpies[2] of Virgil, and the generation of 'all monstrous, all prodigious things' from 'night and hell,' are united in the same image, at the expense of the 'revolution harpies of France': another Miltonic eruption. Or the allusion is implicit, as with the text *mens agitat molem* (perhaps remembered through Pope) in the speech *On Conciliation*, where it is applied to 'the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire.' Sometimes, in the later tracts, where Burke lets himself go, the elaboration is startling. Once he is praising, with fierce sarcasm, the clear and orderly style of the French minister who affronted our ambassador. His mind flies to the 'embroideries of Babylon' and the 'looms of the Gobelins' for a parallel to the artistic perfection of the insult; and thence to the tapestry,[3] with which Virgil wished to adorn the theatre that he proposed to raise to Augustus

> upon the banks of the Mincio, who now hides his head in his reeds, and leads his slow and melancholy windings through banks wasted by the Barbarians of Gaul.

Nor is this enough; for he goes on to quote Virgil, and then Dryden's 'somewhat paraphrastic' version of him. The patch

is gorgeous, but could false oratory go further? It is different in Burke's greater days, when he pleads for America, and when his ornament is soberer.

But before considering his use of figure, we have to search, somewhat baffled, for the models of Burke's sentence and period. He does not go back consciously to the full-sounding harmonies of the seventeenth century, save indeed when he remembers Milton. He owes no debt like that of Johnson to Sir Thomas Browne, or that of Ruskin to Jeremy Taylor. In his youth he studied Bolingbroke, of whose sentiments and manner he produced that remarkable piece of mimicry, *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756); which some mistook for a serious utterance, and even for Bolingbroke's own. Burke in fact scouted Bolingbroke, and called him, justly enough, 'a superficial writer'; and in his parody can be read the exact contradiction of all his own articles of faith. Nor is it clear, as has sometimes been suggested, that his own style was moulded by Bolingbroke's. The author of *The Idea of a Patriot King*, however little he may have had to say, studied Cicero to some purpose, and wrote his ample and balanced sentences with a noticeable light ease;—with that 'careless and negligent ease of a man of quality,' which Scott unluckily attributed to Byron. Bolingbroke's cadence is more flowing than that of any writer of his century, Gibbon not excepted. Burke never flows or floats; he swims powerfully, heavily, with no grace in his stroke, but with a staying power that makes Bolingbroke look ridiculous. It is not easy to see that he learnt anything which he could not learn in Bolingbroke's great original, Cicero. He has not, indeed, the ease of Cicero either; but a close study of his oratorical habits irresistibly suggests the antique pattern. He is nearer, at any rate, to the master of Latin eloquence than is either of his contemporaries, Gibbon and Johnson, who share with him the honours of reviving the longer period and a statelier diction, after the reign of the plainer, or flatter, or briefer Georgian prose. It is rarely that he falls into the familiar movement of *The Rambler*; indeed, the following sentence is beneath either writer, and might have come from the later pages of their little friend, Miss Burney:

It is a remark,[1] liable to as few exceptions as any generality can be, that they who applaud prosperous folly, and adore triumphant guilt, have never been known to succour or even to pity human weakness or offence when they become subject to human vicissitude, and meet with punishment instead of obtaining power (1791).

This pedantry is unusual; for even when Burke's construction is rude or heavy, it is saved by his thought and impetus.

His sentences can be longer and more intricate than those of any good author between Clarendon and Coleridge; and their patterns are endless. He likes a complex rather than a merely co-ordinate or accretive structure, and one that is carefully jointed into a series of lesser contrasted clauses. One example must serve:

> But I cannot conceive [1] any existence under heaven (which in the depths of its wisdom tolerates all sorts of things) that is more truly odious and disgusting, than an impotent helpless creature, without civil wisdom or military skill, without a consciousness of any other qualification for power but his servility to it, bloated with pride and arrogance, calling for battles which he is not to fight, contending for a violent dominion which he can never exercise, and satisfied to be himself mean and miserable, in order to render others contemptible and wretched (1777).

But neither this, nor yet the brief and gnomic phrase in which he excels, is his staple sentence. He often intersperses Tacitean or Sallustian epigrams among his long-breathed paragraphs; and these often fall into antithetic rhythm, suggesting the eager passion to clinch the argument. Thus of Rockingham we hear that

> he never stirred from his ground; no, not an inch. He remained fixed and determined, in principle, in measure, and in conduct. He practised no managements. He secured no retreat. He sought no apology (1774).

These triplicities would weary if they were frequent. Another variation is a fourfold movement rising to a climax, each member being similarly introduced:

> I am a Royalist, I blushed for this degradation of the crown. I am a Whig, I blushed for the dishonour of Parliament. I am a true Englishman, I felt to the quick for the disgrace of England. I am a man, I felt for the melancholy reverse of human affairs, in the fall of the first power in the world (1780).

Such examples only seem artificial when they are torn from the page. Burke's skill is to lead up to them, and so to heat the mind that they do not seem beyond the mark when we reach them. They have, no doubt, that fulness of diction, which is in danger of becoming a plethora. But this is a fault of power and wealth, not of weakness. Passages of the staccato

kind, moreover, do not represent Burke's regular style, any more than his long, winding periods represent it. His working sentence is neither long nor short, but of the middle scale, perhaps with a leaning towards amplitude. Its duration is fixed by the power of attention in an average audience. It moves fast, but not without effort. The wheels, we may say, shake the ground, like those of a gun-carriage dragged along impatiently. As an example, the well-known defence of party may be chosen, with the sentences numbered for convenience; but we have to think of the same manner being prolonged over a thousand pages.

1. Party[1] is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. 2. For my part, I find it impossible to conceive that any one believes in his own politics, or thinks them to be of any weight, who refuses to adopt the means of having them reduced *into* practice. 3. It is the business of the speculative philosopher to mark the proper ends of government. 4. It is the business of the politician, who is the philosopher in action, to find out proper means towards those ends, and to employ them with effect. 5. Therefore every *honourable connection* will avow it is *their* first purpose to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution, with all the power and authority of the state (1770).

This shows the usual varieties of the scale well enough; and it may be added that though the diction is classical and pure, still the phrases in italics would not now be used except by some one imitating the author. Indeed, only the third sentence would be entirely natural. Burke is perhaps the last great author, apart from irregular masters like Carlyle, in whom we continually feel these little points of strangeness.

VI

The proper study of his rhetoric would demand a treatise. The scholastic pigeon-holer of all the figures of speech need go no further for examples than to this one author. They are second nature to Burke, with his dramatic, Irish habit of tongue and his classical education. Many of them have gone out of public use, and even Macaulay, who is not too restrained in his tropes, would never have used those in which Burke, in 1783, referred to the defeat of the East India Bill:

1. God forbid[1] I should forget it! 2. O illustrious disgrace! O victorious defeat! 3. May your memorial be fresh and new to the latest generations! 4. May the day of that generous conflict be stamped in characters never to be cancelled or worn out from the records of time! 5. Let no man hear of us, who shall not hear that in a struggle against the intrigues of courts, and the perfidious levity of the multitude, we fell in the cause of honour, in the cause of our country, in the cause of human nature itself! 6. But if fortune should be as powerful over fame, as she has been prevalent over virtue, at least our conscience is beyond her jurisdiction. 7. My poor share in the support of that great measure no man shall ravish from me. 8. It shall be safely lodged in the sanctuary of my heart; never, never to be torn from thence, but with those holds that grapple it to life.

This sounds, in form, artificial, as though Burke were instinctively thinking in Latin prose; and artificial it is. But there is no limit to the measure in which a man can teach himself to use such artifice for the honest expression of feeling, whilst yet he elaborates every phrase. Any academic dissection, therefore, of such methods, is only following, however coldly, in the steps of the artist. Nearly all Burke's favourite tools are seen in this passage; we can give them the rhetorician's names if we like. In no. 1, exclamation. In no. 2, 'oxymoron,' or contradiction, like the apostrophe to the Duke of Bedford as 'poor rich man!' or Romeo's 'cold fire! sick health!' In no. 4, the repetition or amplification of no. 3. In no. 5, rhythmical antithesis, and climax with three members; as in another passage, where he speaks 'of human, of Christian, of English blood'—narrowing to a climax. In no. 6, antithesis again. In no. 7, inversion, a rather favourite device of the Latinising orator, found often in the *Letter to a Noble Lord*: 'Personal offence I have given them none.' This habit of speech has become rarer since Burke's day. In no. 8, metaphor and iteration; and so following.

The colours, however, are painted in, not merely plastered on. They do not burst without transition from the firm, close, rather grey, but never cold texture of the whole. They could not disappear without loss to the argument, as so many of Macaulay's patches could disappear to its advantage. This is true of most of Burke's decorations. The most favoured of them, which is indeed inherent in all oratory, but was learnt from Burke by Macaulay, depends on the pleasure of echo. It is the harping on a single keyword, or the repetition of an opening phrase (the 'epanaphora' of the grammarians). In the speech *On Conciliation* the keyword is *peace*.

The proposition | is peace.[1] | Not peace | through the medium | of war; | not peace | to be hunted | through the labyrinth | of intricate | and endless | negotiations | ; not peace | to arise | out of universal | discord, | fomented | from principle | in all parts | of the empire | ; not peace. . . . It is simple | peace; | sought | in its natural | course, | and in its ordinary | haunts. | It is peace | sought | in the spirit | of peace | ; and laid | in principles | purely | pacific (1775).

This iteration makes us see the stubborn faces on the opposite benches. There is contempt in it; their ears must be dinned, they must remember the word *peace* through the long intricate survey that is to follow. So, in the description (1785) of the 'fictitious private debts' of the East India Company's servants, Burke hammers viciously on his keyword like a blacksmith on a rivet:

> It is there the public is robbed. It is robbed in its army; it is robbed in its civil administration; it is robbed in its credit; it is robbed in its investment which forms the commercial connection between that country and Europe. There is the robbery.

The historian of literary criticism[2] has said that Burke is a master of the figure Amplification. It is indeed his habit and his instinct, not only to 'wind into his subject,' as Johnson said, 'like a serpent,' but to progress in it by a kind of uncoiling motion, dilating as he goes. Argument and picture, detail and inference, question and metaphor, all move to the attack. The paragraph advances in a kind of *crescendo*, the clauses often lengthening and growing louder up to its middle point, or a little later, and then slowing and shortening to a brief conclusion; the whole running upon a single motive, or even, as in the above quotations, upon a single word. Even when this plan is not adopted, the tendency to amplify, or turn facet after facet of the idea to the front, until they are all exhausted, is invariable. It is hard to illustrate briefly; but let an entire speech of Burke's be read from this point of view. The contrast of the independent member and his 'court-rival,' in *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*, is too long to extract, but is a good example on a small scale. The passage on peace already given is shorter still. It is wonderful to see how Burke avoids verbiage, or saying the same thing in other terms, which is the risk of this method. From that he is saved by the fulness of his thinking and his horror of magnificent platitude.

Often he has a turn that would have aroused the fervour of the great appreciator known to us by the name of Longinus. In his *Speech on Economical Reform* (1780) he risks an appeal, in the face of the Commons, to the example of the enemy.[1] He has described the financial policy of Necker, and the reforms of the French revenue. But he repudiates any invidious purpose in the comparison :

> It is in order to excite in us the spirit of a noble emulation. Let the nations make war upon each other (since we must make war), not with a low and vulgar malignity, but with a competition of virtues. This is the only way by which both parties can gain by war. The French have imitated us ; let us through them, imitate ourselves ; ourselves in our better and happier days.

A speaker who was willing to offend for the sake of startling, and to defeat his purpose, would simply have said : 'The French have imitated us ; let us imitate *them*.' Burke comes to the verge of this imprudence, but he sees the outcry on the lips of the adversary, and silences them by the word *ourselves* ; and then, seizing the moment of bewilderment, repeats it, and explains it by the noble past ; *ourselves, in our better and happier days* ; he does not say when those days were ; the days of Elizabeth, or of Cromwell ? Let the House choose ! This is true oratory, honest diplomacy.

The whole oration, together with the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, is an armoury of Burke's weapons of irony and sarcasm ; for he has hardly any other form of humour. He is generally blunt and savage. If he is brutal at times, we must remember that he had thick skins and skulls on which to operate. It is in the taste of the time, if it is often below what would beseem Burke ; and we hear that Lord North, who cherished no rancour against wit, rejoiced in the skill of Burke's sallies at the expense of himself and his friends. He had occasion thus to applaud, when he heard himself described as '*submitting with spirit* to the spirited remonstrances of the Welsh,' and may have made himself happy over the celebrated obstacle to the reform of the royal kitchen, that 'the King's turnspit was a member of parliament.' He may have relished the gloomy splendour of the passage about the dead accountants of the exchequer :

> Death, indeed, domineers over everything but the forms of the exchequer. Over these it has no power. They are impassive and immortal. The audit of the exchequer, more severe than the audit to which the accountants are gone, demands proofs which in the

nature of things are difficult, sometimes impossible, to be had. . . . Terrors and ghosts of unlaid accountants haunt the houses of their children from generation to generation.

The pictures of the Board of Trade as a 'sort of gently ripening hothouse,' and of the turmoil in the King's household at the threat of reform—'what a storm of gold keys would fly about the ears of the minister,' must have completed Lord North's good temper. The speech was one of Burke's happiest as well as most effective efforts. The reckless outspoken savagery of the *Regicide Peace* is still far off; and the deadly courtesy of the *Letter to a Noble Lord* would have been out of place. That historic retort was written in 1796, in the full tide of Burke's anti-Gallic diatribes; and beside them it is a model of restraint, made more telling by periodic eruptions of direct wrath. He seizes to the full the advantage of a first-rate case. He is too old for mock-modesty, which indeed had never been his failing. The young and opulent Duke of Bedford had attacked in the Lords Pitt's offer of a pension to the great preacher of 'economical reform.' In sonority, in dignity, in the ease with which he tosses his enemy upon his pike, in a certain Shakespearean freedom of words, Burke never surpassed this short composition. The name and title of the Duke of Bedford always come back upon the ear, each time with a louder ring of formally polite contempt.

> It little signifies to the world what becomes of such things as me, or even as the Duke of Bedford. . . . But that is high matter, and ought not to be mixed with anything of so little moment, as what may belong to me, or even to the Duke of Bedford.

And when he is contrasting 'his Grace' with the martyred *noblesse*, the epithet Shakespearean is borne out by such a turn as this:

> A great many of them had as pompous titles as he, and were of full as illustrious a race; some few of them had fortunes as ample; several of them, without meaning the least disparagement to the Duke of Bedford, were as wise, and as virtuous, and as valiant, and as well educated, and as complete in all the lineaments of men of honour, as he is.

This mode of fierce understatement—irony in the original sense of that term—is much affected by Burke. His defence of his consistency in accepting the pension, and of his career, is needless; but his personality, like Milton's, is always bursting through his most impersonal writings, and never to better

purpose than here. He has, too, the same unfailing wells of scorn and anger.

Burke's comparisons and metaphors would repay a curious inquiry. In his profusion he is more like a seventeenth-century writer—Jeremy Taylor or Barrow—than any one of his own century. But he does not, like Taylor, introduce such things for the sake of their beauty, to relieve a stiff discourse, or as a vent for the poetry of his nature. They are commonly an arm of offence. Sometimes they are genial, like the picture of General Conway, in the *Speech on American Taxation*, after he had carried a repeal of the duties; 'hope elevated, and joy brightened his crest.' In the great set passages, like that on Hyder Ali raiding the people of the Carnatic, they are heavily and splendidly loaded; the 'black cloud,' 'the menacing meteor which blackened all their horizon,' are precisely apt figures for the terror descending from the hills. More often a harsh and homely pleasantry is their characteristic, as in the blusterous description of Chatham's ministry, 'so checkered and speckled.' Burke, in his essay on Taste, prefixed to the tractate *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, had spoken of the happy liveliness of our sensations, 'in the morning of our days, when our senses are unworn and tender.' 'It is rather the soft green of the soul on which we rest our eyes.' His own figurative language seldom has that kind of delicate freshness. It is rather calculated so as to raise a grating startled laugh, or the applause of a gross excited audience. His savageries are innumerable, and constantly take the shape of similes from birds and animals. The eagle, the raven, the cuckoo, the wild cat, the tame cat ('the grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers'), the bird of night, the harpies, the leviathan, are the menagerie that he lets loose into his metaphors. He is not seldom animal himself, especially in his later explosions: it is the foible of a big temperament. Images from ulcers and offal, from midwives and embryos, seem to him the only ones that are not inadequate to certain subjects. His fashion is to elaborate them; there is a run of words, in which the accentual beat falls on the salient images. In one passage,[1] in the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, we can pick out the bearing by these words alone; the run is upon 'passive . . . ravisher . . . resistance . . . wittols . . . seducers . . . assignations.' The reference is to the supposed attempts of the English 'Jacobin' societies to violate the British constitution. At the beginning of the third *Letter on a Regicide Peace*, a whole page is not

enough for an epic simile, suggested by the tale of the Irishman, who 'on his journey having found a piece of pleasant road, proposed to his companion to go over it again.' The 'irksome journey of the regicide negotiations' is here signified. But Burke will not let it go; his restless fancy labours it out; and at any rate he observes the true rule of the simile, that little of it shall start away from the original theme, or be alien to the thing compared. It is another side of his amplifying habit, and he thus rounds off his paragraph:

> Backward and forward; oscillation, not progression; much going in a scanty space; the travels of a postilion, miles enough to circle the globe in one short stage; we have been, and we are yet to be, jolted and rattled over the misplaced stones, and the treacherous hollows, of this rough, ill-kept, broken-up, treacherous French causeway.

We do not want all this; it adds nothing to the idea, though much to the image; and perhaps Burke's memories of *diligence*-travelling, when he visited France years before, quicken his wrath, which extends to the road itself and not only to the regicides.

Burke is a great master of sound, as these quotations show, though his harmonies are what he calls 'sublime' rather than beautiful. His rhythm is emphatic, and far less uniform than Gibbon's. The surface undulation is churned up and broken by the passion of the orator. For the same reason, there is far less correspondence of accent in the clauses than is found in Johnson's formal prose. The cross-currents of feeling make little swirls and back-eddies, and sometimes also heavy breakers, in the impetuous, tidal movement of Burke's language. Speaking technically, the ordinary iambic or anapæstic march of English prose is greatly varied by the spondees, trochees, dactyls, and more complex groups, which signify some startling arrest of attention, or accompany some vehement gesture. This may be illustrated from the passage on *peace* quoted earlier. It falls into some thirty-four natural groups, and ten of these open with, or consist of, a stressed syllable: a proportion far above the ordinary. Such analysis, of necessity rude, merely indicates Burke's tune upon his anvil; it would be easy to quote instances of a higher and more cunning cadence, but they are everywhere; and his skill in the orchestration of language is not rivalled until we reach Landor and De Quincey.

Much of Burke's edifice has not tumbled; it has only weathered, like an old collegiate building, and remains stable

and fit for a new race to inhabit'. The other doctrinal prose that meets us between Burke and Coleridge is often in a tedious style of architecture, and crazy too. We may ask what Priestley, Mackintosh, and Paine have to do with letters. Unphilosophical impatience! Their achievement in the plainer kind of ministerial prose is important, and they are capable of floating significant ideas for a whole generation.

CHAPTER IX

PROSE OF DOCTRINE—*Continued*

I. Burke's adversaries: Richard Price; sharpshooters; nature of replies. Joseph Priestley. Mackintosh. *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* and later utterances; literary character. Robert Hall. Thomas Paine; *Common Sense*; *Rights of Man*; *Age of Reason.*

II. William Godwin, the typical doctrinaire; influence; development of sympathy; essays; *Political Justice.* Mary Wollstonecraft; *Rights of Women.*

III. Arthur Young, *Travels in France,* etc.; autobiography. Jeremy Bentham; view of the past; divergence from the revolutionary theorists. *Principles of Morals and Legislation*; Bentham's calculus and principle of 'utility.' His form and style; concentration on names and definitions. Verbal coinages: nature of influence.

IV. William Paley, his eclectic system; and official character; *Moral and Political Philosophy*; his optimism, how qualified; his temper; lucidity and excellence of his writing. James Mill. Change in the rationalistic spirit. T. R. Malthus and David Ricardo. Robert Owen.

V. William Cobbett; relation to the theorists and the Revolution. *Peter Porcupine*; sketch of literary life. *Advice to Young Men and Women*; and 'to a lover.' Romance and Cobbett. Educational views; *Rural Rides,* tirades, observations, scenery; love of beauty.

I

THE writers who provoked or answered Burke during his later years cannot be recounted here. Most of their pamphlets are but waifs of paper rag upon the torrent. Three or four of them emerge into literature, or rather into the debateable ground upon its borders. One oration once famous, but now remembered through the bloodshot representation of it in the *Reflections,* may be named in order to show it as it was. This is the *Discourse on the Love of our Country* (1789), delivered by Dr. Richard Price, the moral philosopher and radical, to the 'Society for commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain.' Price had been a noted champion of American independence, and his speech begins as a mild nonconformist decoction of the 'Declaration of the Rights of Men.' In bland, neat propositions he asserts the claim to liberty of conscience in religion, the right to resist the abuses of power, and lastly, 'the right to

choose our governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for ourselves.' There is still gross inequality in the representation, and toleration is unachieved. To put these things right is true patriotism ; and Christ Himself ' possessed a particular affection for His country, though a very wicked country.' The Revolution over the water is a great omen : and, exclaims Price, ' methinks I see the dominion of kings exchanged for the dominion of law, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience.' This was just the tone to exasperate an Old Whig, with a philosophic and imaginative reverence for the past. In an appendix to a later edition, Price pressed home that analogy between the two revolutions, the English and the French, which Burke was to spend so much of his power in discriminating. But he died in 1791, and left the task of fuller apology to others.

On the issue of the *Reflections*, the air was darkened by a surprising cross-fire aimed at Burke,[1] of darts, and mud-pellets, and heavier musketry as well. He was taunted as a turncoat by Charles Pigott, the author of the scurrilous *Female Jockey Club*, and by Wolcot, the kennel-satirist. Porson is said to have written the *Catechism to the Natives of Hampshire*, in which Burke's scorn for the ' swinish multitude ' is parodied. Mary Wollstonecraft said that had Burke been a Jew, he would have joined in the cry of ' Crucify Him ! ' and the republican historian of England, Mrs. Catherine Macaulay,[2] in a pamphlet largely written in italics, exclaimed that he wished ' *to crush all the rights of men.*' ' A Country Attorney ' rose up to prove that there was much good in lawyers. Staunch Whigs and Hanoverians, like Lord Stanhope and Sir Brooke Boothby (whose tract is a pattern of stiff dignity), argued that the principles of the National Assembly were, after all, but those of Holt and Somers. The question, wrote Boothby, was reduced to this, ' whether the late government of France was such as ought to have been endured ' ; and whilst rejoicing in the overthrow of the French Church, he approved, like his adversary, the ' apparent ' inequalities of the English representation. The epithet is a curious instance of arrested Whiggery.

The first attacks of weight came almost simultaneously from three writers, Joseph Priestley (*Letters to Mr. Burke*, 1791), Sir James Mackintosh (*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, 1791), and Thomas Paine (*The Rights of Man*, in two parts, 1791 and 1792). Arthur Young's chapter on the Revolution did not

appear till 1794, at the close of his *Travels in France*. But these works do not merely arise out of the *Reflections*. They imply a powerful existing movement of thought, which was now to undergo its crucial test. The old arguments on either side are now not only reanimated, but transformed and made real by events; hope and fear become passionate; and after 1789 there is a new scope and a new life in our controversial literature.

Of the three mentioned, Priestley and Paine were tried debaters, and Mackintosh a younger student. Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) had already won his glory as a chemist, and prominence as the philosopher of the Unitarians, whom he had joined after a long Odyssey as a theologian. He was a truly voluminous writer. His soon obsolete history of *Early Opinions concerning Jesus* (1756) was one of his first ventures. Bishop Horsley, in his tracts,[1] had retorted with greater learning, with equal but more skilful acrimony, and in a far more finished style, upon Priestley's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1782). This is the work of a half-way rationalist, or what he terms a 'rational dissenter,' who believes in the Resurrection, but questions the Atonement. Priestley's ultimate aim, however, is to plead for religious toleration and the abolition of tests; a reform in which Horsley, whose liberalism[2] was in many ways signal considering his caste and surroundings, is curiously in agreement with his foe. We can guess Priestley's political doctrine. It is based, in words to which Bentham owned his debt, on 'utility,'[3] for we read in the *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768):

> The good and happiness of the members, that is, the majority of the members, of any state, is the great standard by which everything relating to that state must finally be determined.

Priestley[4] also infers what Burke so fiercely denies, that the decision as to what is for the public good must needs rest with the majority. The transition from Whig to Radical theory is here visible. Kings, in Dryden's phrase, are 'only officers in trust,' and the people may uproot them on good cause shown. At the same time, says Priestley, the people, or majority, must interfere little with the individual, for the variety of Athenian habit and custom is better than a Spartan uniformity. The golden rule of toleration must be stretched, even for the benefit of the atheist. Popery is, says Priestley agreeably, 'the most considerable part of that Antichrist which God will destroy in His own time'; but Papists must be allowed in this world

to worship and to teach school. Universal suffrage, he adds, is not to be thought of, but he would give votes to 'the majority of those whose circumstances render them above being corrupted'—a truly Whig deliverance.

His *Letters to Burke* are less reserved, and bring before us in a lively way those hopes and joys of which Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote, in the glow, clouded by regrets, of their own retrospect. Priestley was now an oldish idealist; but he too 'stood on the top of golden hours,' and he gives the emotions of the *Prelude* in plain prose:

> Government, we may now [1791] expect to see, not only in theory and in books, but in actual practice, calculated for the general good, and taking no more on it than the general good requires; leaving all men the enjoyment of as many of their natural rights as possible, and no more interfering with matters of religion, with men's notions concerning God and a future state, than with philosophy or medicine.[1]

Priestley's attacks on Burke's supposed inconsistency are commonplace, nor can he grasp Burke's profound view of the vitality of the social fabric. He chiefly resents the attack made in the *Reflections* upon the civil disestablishment of the French Church, and fully develops the nonconformist view. A church, he says, with unwonted vigour of imagery, is a 'sloth eating the branches, a glutton on the shoulders of this noble animal,' namely the state. Like most of the disputants on either side, Priestley finds himself thinking more about England than about France. Nothing is rarer than to see the question of the Revolution argued without reference either to the Whig Revolution, or the home politics of the day, or the future relations of the two countries. Save at the hands of Young, it hardly can be said to receive scientific discussion at all.

Of all those who answered Burke, Sir James Mackintosh[2] most resembled what Burke once had been. That sympathetic vision of another country's needs and vital impulses, which lights up the American Speeches, is not absent from *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. In 1791 Mackintosh found it no strain to justify the Revolution by the Whig tenets which he had largely learned from Burke himself, and to enlist in the cause a store of political and historical learning which no one else on the same side could furnish, and which bore a promise of rivalling his master's. He was only twenty-six, but in a certain weighty fervour he already excelled, as the sentence already quoted (p. 243) shows. He justifies the action of the Third

Estate as sanctioned by the nation in fact if not in form, and ably defends the doings of the National Assembly from the legal and institutional standpoint. Nor does its audacity repel him :

> Where would be the atrocious guilt of a grand experiment, to ascertain the portion of freedom and happiness that can be created by political institutions ? . . . A government of *art*, the work of legislative intellect, was loudly demanded.

Commenting on this 'experiment,' Mackintosh develops his view of the rights of man from his new-Whig vantage-ground, which is different from that of the revolutionaries themselves. He does not say, with Paine, that 'society is made by our wants, and government by our wickedness,' but he regards positive law as in essence prohibitive. Whatever it does not forbid, that the 'natural' rights of man, which are anterior in authority to law, permit him to do. Some of these rights were indeed surrendered to law, but only in order to prevent men from violating the rest and injuring one another. But no law can supersede the right of men to political equality within the commonwealth. In 1688 no grander experiment was needed, in order to preserve this right, than to change the monarch ; but in 1789 the whole social order required remodelling. The excesses of the first three years seemed to Mackintosh the inevitable price of the change. He also clearly foresaw the international import of the events of France ; 'the old Gothic governments of Europe have lived their time.' His weakness is to think that the Revolutionary settlement was a stable one ; and, unlike Burke, he fails to see the share of the sceptical writers in the overthrow of the French Church. But his treatise brought him fame at once ; and though it did not reach the people, it served to rally the educated Whigs from the shock inflicted by the *Reflections*.

Mackintosh's later phases of feeling towards the Revolution are a kind of prose counterpart of Wordsworth's, and would form a singular study. In five years his zeal was shaken ; and his review of the *Regicide Peace* introduced him to Burke. The veteran praised him for his 'victory over himself,' and bequeathed him, as it were, his own sword ; and the natural affinity between the two men now found full expression. In 1799, Mackintosh gave his once famous lectures 'On the Law of Nature and Nations,' of which only the first, containing the scheme of the whole series, is preserved. Here he recanted, in the face of London, his earlier views ; the massacres in

Paris, the oppression of the Swiss, the whole course of the last seven years, had cleared away his illusions, and he delivered an acrid attack, whose tone he afterwards regretted, on the principles of one of his hearers, William Godwin. In later years Mackintosh coolly reviews his own revulsions[1] in the light of the sequel, writing *On the State of France* in 1815 during the Hundred Days. The good and evil of the Revolution he at last finds 'a most perplexing account to balance,' seeing that so many good results had proceeded from events that were attended with so many detestable crimes. This conclusion does not greatly advance the question; but Mackintosh, with that judicial precision which made him ineffective in the Commons, but which is his real title to fame as a publicist, analyses both the benefits and the crimes with scientific patience.

His career as a lawyer, as a speaker, as a historian of ethical theory, as a political philosopher, and as a humanitarian, hardly belongs to letters. Little that he has left holds its ground, and his multifarious accomplishment makes it hard to fix his features. He would have been a great professor, but it is hard to say of what. His prompt and learned memory and his swift facility as a talker, orator and writer made him a kind of precursor of Macaulay, whose description of him is classical. The journals of the time attest his reputation.[2] Lord John Russell and Thomas Moore reveal him as an intellectual focus for the earlier Holland House group, and the latter observes:

> Mackintosh, as usual, delightful; his range of knowledge and memory so extensive, passing (as Greville remarked) from Voltaire's verses to Sylvia up to the most voluminous details of the Council of Trent.

Society has usually some personage on whom it relies for this mixture of wit and erudition; who stands to it for intellect without the repulsiveness of intellect; who does its thinking for it, gracefully; who may say what he will, and it is sure to be excellent. Mackintosh, Macaulay, and Lord Acton have sustained this truly English tradition. But Mackintosh was more lucid in pleading, and in big, synthetic, historical survey, than in philosophic thinking. James Mill's hard-hitting and acrid *Fragment on Mackintosh* exposes a certain vagueness, which meets us often when he handles fundamentals. He is much more at home in court. His defence of Peltier is a really noble, though a somewhat forensically flushed, composition; and his speech on the *Case of Missionary Smith*,

though less celebrated, is equally good. Mackintosh was, like his friend Romilly, an impassioned assailant of injustice, of the best Whig tradition; he was a gallant soldier in the war of humanity; he fought for the mitigation of the hateful old criminal law, and lived to speak in 1831 for Reform.

The style of *Vindiciæ* is that of the day, periodic, balanced, and too like *The Rambler*. It lends itself to epigram; we hear of Mr. Burke's 'virulent encomiums on urbanity, and inflammatory harangues against violence.' The orations are clear, cogent, fastidiously worded, but somehow fail, like most of Mackintosh's writings, to bite on the mind. In general, he is lucid, packed with illustrations, varieties, quotations from Lucan and Cicero, careful appeals, now of rather ashen aspect; and we wonder why we do not wonder more. Perhaps the style of the lecturer is the most impermanent in this world; and Mackintosh, even in his diaries, even in his journals to his wife, is ever an agreeable lecturer or an impersonal, official reviewer. Hazlitt's[1] tart, sprightly, rather unfair account of him, outlives all that the man himself so equitably, so attractively, enunciated.

Another readable and reasoned plea against Burke, written in the tide of the reaction, and never recanted, is the *Apology for the Freedom of the Press and for General Liberty* (1793), by Robert Hall. It is a lucid and grave defence of free inquiry, the right of association, and parliamentary reform. 'It is incumbent on Mr. Burke and his followers to ascertain the *time* when natural rights were relinquished.' Hall deplores the Terror; but 'the friends of Liberty, instead of wishing for a similar event in England, are intent chiefly on reform to avoid its necessity.' He wrote much else on politics and always in the same sense, but his reputation rests chiefly on the records of his pulpit oratory.

Thomas Paine[2] (1737-1809) is a very good combative writer, though he is the contrary of a beautiful one. There is no doubt as to the tribe to which he belongs, or the audience to which he speaks. He aims at every one who can read print and is capable of a political or anti-clerical passion, and who can tolerate his homely, often vulgar directness. He has affinities with Defoe, for he can tell a plain tale noticeably well, as is shown by his accounts of his stay in the house that once had been the Pompadour's; of his arrest by the French police, just after he had finished the first part of *The Age of Reason*; and of his illness in the Luxembourg prison. He is Defoe without the cunning of hand. He also made little apologues

and fables, which are rather clumsy. Like Cobbett, he is a heavy-weight, unsparing of punishment, and hammering at many of the same intractable things—the court, the titled, the pensioners, and all stabled clergy. But he has not Defoe's art, or Cobbett's love of real life and the concrete picturesque. Paine's true business is to decoct and clarify doctrine, radical, republican or deistic, for the consumption of the plain citizen; and no English author of his day had a larger number of readers at the time. He could no more be ignored than a shower of stones, which indeed his sentences resemble; and they fly at the most august of heads and windows and facades. This is not what he calls a 'hinting and intimating manner of writing.' On the Book of Genesis he observes:

> It begins abruptly. It is nobody that speaks. It is nobody that hears. It is addressed to nobody. It has neither first, second, nor third person. It has every criterion of being a tradition. It has no voucher.

Evidently such a man has but a moderate feeling for high literature; nor does he know that its niceties exist—it is not that he consciously avoids them. It would take pages to mention the qualities of this kind that Paine does not possess; but their absence was essential to the terror and rancour which he inspired for a generation, and which have caused his aims and ideas often to be misinterpreted upon false hearsay. He can still be read; it is not so easy to go to sleep over Tom Paine as it is over Mackintosh or Priestley; and in spite of his amusing unacquaintance with most of history, art, philosophy and religion, the issues for which he fought, and the arguments he used, are not so obsolete but that he can still give provocation, as he would have wished to do.

Paine wrote little before 1776; he had then been in America two years, and produced his pamphlet *Common Sense*, which urges, with real dignity and *afflatus*, that 'independence is the only bond that can keep and tie us together.' The articles that followed, *The American Crisis*, are of a high order of patriotic oratory. It is not every pressman who can thus spirit up a whole army at a critical time. The writing is at times brutal, and so is war; but it is full of essential rough nobility, and it has more swell and fulness than Paine's later works; it is in the good tradition of Swift, though destitute of Swift's irony and subtlety. Paine's other American writings, largely composed after his return to Europe, such as the *Memorial to Monroe*, and the aggressive *Letter to Washington*,

are narrower, and too full of the author's self-esteem and self-confidence—qualities which proved a useful carapace for a man with innumerable enemies, and which rested upon his impregnable courage.

The first part (1791) of *The Rights of Man* is a reply to Burke's *Reflections*; the second (1792) also controverts the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*. Together they form a popular text-book of Republican principles, which won for Paine a long-resounding fame and obloquy. This polemical sermon on the tenets of the Declaration of Independence was written in England, whither Paine had returned in 1787. He was prosecuted, and wished to face trial, but was induced, it is said by William Blake, to escape to Paris. He was tried, and defended by Erskine, and outlawed in his absence. Punishments hailed upon those who published and spread *The Rights of Man*, but many hundred thousand copies were sold in England. Paine's career in Paris, his ties with Condorcet, his election to the Assembly, his imprisonment by Robespierre, and his release, belong to history; so does his ineffectual but creditable and wise plea that 'Louis Capet' should be spared and exiled to the United States. The war between Burke and Paine is more than a dispute of authors; it represents the conflict of two great historic movements and two types of brain. They could contradict each other, but could never come to close quarters. Paine's *Dissertation on the First Principles of Government* shows this very clearly (1795). Law and government are to Burke the crown of social endeavour and the life of the body politic. To Paine and his school they are unavoidable inventions, ever dangerous to the freedom which they profess to secure. They have to prove their harmlessness at every step; they always tend to trespass on the sacred circle of individual or 'natural' rights. The only conception that could help to harmonise these views was that of historic growth and progressive adaptation; and this conception hardly reached the revolutionary camp, though it had been sketched by Herder and others, and a distinct premonition of it may be seen in the far-reaching *Esquisse* of Condorcet. To Paine it meant nothing; nor did it effectively penetrate Burke, whose ideas of political development were arrested by his engrossment with 1688. Burke cared much for history, but not much for the history of the future. In his plea for leaving America alone, he had never embraced the 'metaphysical' principles of freedom and equality afterwards formulated in the Declaration of Independence.

Paine has no original ideas, but his course of thought is peculiar. It is wrong to treat him as a kind of Whig who has broken loose into radicalism. His view is in origin as much religious as political.[1] He had been brought up a quaker; he had belonged to a body with which the law had savagely interfered to repress the free cult of the inner light. Paine is a strange offspring of the gospel of peace and quietude; but his ardour for freedom of thought and expression is in fact nourished upon it, and his attacks on the edifice and external authority of the Christian religion proceed from the same source. He became a deist of a type hardly contemplated by Bishop Butler; not an 'atheist,' for he asserts with much vehemence the existence of a first cause and his 'hope of happiness hereafter.' A clue is thus found to the inner connection between *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*. It must be added that Paine had a genuine 'religion of humanity,'[2] and seems to have coined the phrase. His information as to the condition of the French people, though slight indeed beside that of Arthur Young, was sufficient to feather the most telling of his shafts against Burke. The passage has often been quoted, though not always credited to Paine, and perhaps marks the highest scope of his eloquence:

> Not one glance of compassion, not one commiserating reflection that I can find throughout his book, has he bestowed on those who lingered out the most wretched of lives, a life without hope in the most miserable of prisons. It is painful to behold a man employing his talents to corrupt himself. Nature has been kinder to Mr. Burke than he is to her. He is not affected by the reality of distress touching his heart, but by the showy semblance of it striking his imagination. He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird.

Paine wrote the first part of *The Age of Reason* (1794) in prison, out of his memory; the second part, done with the Bible before him, is minuter and duller. He has no sense of poetry, and not an ounce of scholarship; all his objections are those of a hard rabid mother-wit. He assaults the whole body of revealed religion, the supernatural, and the claims temporal and spiritual of all the churches. In this, and in his method and manners, it would not be hard to find his French counterparts and suggesters. But Paine is deeply religious in his way; he holds to his scanty creed[3] with fervour; he honestly admires all the works of the Lord—'a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born'; and he believes that 'religious duties consist in doing justice, loving

mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy.' He is also quite sincere when he says that

> The people of France were running headlong into atheism, and I had the work translated and published in their own language to stop them in that career.

The curious can read Paine's address, conceived in the same spirit, to the society of Theophilanthropists in Paris, and his retorts upon Erskine, the Bishop of Llandaff, and others who charged him with blasphemy and error. The same swift, ruthless, shearing stroke is everywhere. There is no amenity, but there is always force, and this in itself implies a kind of form. Paine is the parent of a line of freethinkers whose work, like much of his own, lies below the levels of culture and letters, but who are none the less a stubborn element in the mental life of the nation. It is worth remarking that he too shared in the revulsion [1] against France, not because he doubted his principles, but because France had abandoned them. In 1802 he said, with ' a smile of contempt ' :

> They have shed blood enough for liberty, and now they have it in perfection. This is not a country for an honest man to live in ; they do not understand anything at all of the principles of free government, and the best way is to leave them to themselves. You see they have conquered Europe, only to make it more miserable than it was before.

This clean short cut contrasts with the lengthy spiritual circuits by which the poets reached the same conclusion, or rather gave up their creed as well as their sanguine hopes. But a stranger apostle than Paine has yet to be delineated.

II

Most men, after vanity and heat of blood have long obscured their logic, learn a little from the visitations of experience, which comes like a whiff of ammonia to clear the brain. With the doctrinaire, *le pédant*, the course is reversed. The brain is early his tyrant, and feeds simply on itself and resists experience. Before such a man has ceased to be unteachable, he may be dead, and his books lumber ; and he may have done harm by the way. His best hope is to be overtaken by humanity, to become young in middle age, to find himself out, and to recant ; but this is unlikely to happen. It is still less likely that he never had anything to say. He is the child

of a time when notions are fermenting too quickly for wisdom and knowledge to keep pace with them or to clarify them. It seems incredible that he should ever have moulded men's faith or set them on fire ; yet so it was. After his time, derision being too easy, it is the rueful task of the critic to give him his due. All this we feel in the case of William Godwin [1] (1756-1836), whose fame was followed by an apathy deeper than had befallen, in his own day, the deists of fifty years before. 'Who now reads Bolingbroke ?' Burke had exclaimed ; and who now reads Godwin ? Students, it may be replied, are beginning to do so, and those who are curious in psychology and character. Godwin's connections with the history of opinion are now seen to be important and real. He is the representative and pioneer of the peaceful, idealising type of anarchist who throws out explosive ideas in the intervals of an inoffensive life, and who is usually a Frenchman. Godwin is a focus of radical speculation in England during the last years of the eighteenth century. Mackintosh wrote for legists, and Paine for the 'man in the street' ; but round Godwin and the Wollstonecrafts gathered the intellectual rebels, the essayists and poets, who were influenced by this doctrinaire. Into the poets many of his hopes and conceptions passed, not unlike some stark lump of jelly on the shore that is cast into the sea and flowers into lovely shape and lucent colour when beheld through the dream of the water.

A tribute paid to *Political Justice* by the receptive but critical Crabb Robinson [2] explains its effect as well as anything said of it by the poets :

> I read a book which gave a turn to my mind and in effect directed the whole course of my life. . . . It made me feel more *generously*. I had never before, nor, I am afraid, have I ever since felt so strongly the duty of not living to one's self, but of having for one's sole object the good of the community.

Few of those who deride Godwin deserve to have anything as good as this said about them. He was the friend of Curran, of Coleridge, of Hazlitt, and also of Lamb, who laughed at his pedantries without offence. He has been called a thinking machine without passions ; but he married once for love, and Mary Wollstonecraft would not have accepted a machine ; though Godwin's idea of living twenty doors off his wife certainly betokens much deliberation. Afterwards he wished to marry the beautiful widowed Mrs. Reveley, afterwards Mrs.

Gisborne. 'You are invited to form the sole happiness of one of the most known men of the age'—so he inimitably put his offer; but he was in love nevertheless. These things, together with hardship and bereavements, made some inroads on the crazy intellectualism with which Godwin started. He is remembered too little for the courage that he showed in 1794, when Holcroft and other friends were tried for treason, and too much for his elderly habit of 'preaching and holding the hat.' His cooler negations lost hold on him, but he kept the unquenchable optimism which is the best feature of himself and his group. An old man, and lonely, and in straits, he wrote that 'human understanding and human virtue will hereafter accomplish such things as the heart of man has never yet been daring enough to conceive.' He is most interesting in his essays, where he talks of himself and his youth, with its shyness and courage, its presumption and humility; and of the need of humane methods in education; and of his own tender feeling, which was genuine, as a friend and a father; and of his tardy love of beautiful things. Godwin's mind is the last we should expect to yield to a mystical adoration of nature; but some of his own disciples among the poets may have reacted upon him. In any case, the following passage, written in 1820, is pretty well for an apostle of bare logic. Godwin's development herein reflects that of his time; the whole difference between 1780 and 1820 is implied in the change:

> I am an adorer of nature. I should pine to death if I did not live in the midst of so majestic a structure as I behold on every side. I am never weary of admiring and reverencing it. All that I see, the earth, the sea, the rivers, the trees, the clouds, and, most of all, man, fills me with love and astonishment. My soul is full to bursting with the mystery of all this, and I love it the better for its mysteriousness. It is too wonderful for me; it is past finding out; but it is beyond expression delicious. This is what I call religion.

It is the old devout deism of the revolutionaries with a colouring of the new poetry, pantheistic now in tendency, and almost physical in its expression. There is only one step more to Shelley; and from such a passage we realise better the links between teacher and pupil.

The author of *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* cannot be called a mere journeyman; but he produced hack histories, fables, 'dramas for children,' and even tragedies. Of his

Lives only that of Chaucer is remembered; it was a piece of fresh and honest record-hunting buried in a mass of surplusage. His stories have been noticed already (Ch. VII.). His best writing is found in his essays. *The Enquirer* (1797), and the noticeable *Thoughts on Man* (published 1831, but largely written earlier) mark one of the higher levels in the long depression of the essayist's art between Goldsmith and Hazlitt. Godwin's sketch of the species of English prose is not without interest; he thinks that his own kind, the colder, terser, purer, later kind of classical English, is the very best. He rewrote his sentences incessantly, always aiming at lucidity. His style is affected to the last, in spite of his concessions to poetry, by his unfading and aboriginal faith in logic and the power of argumentation. This tenet is at the base of *Political Justice*, and, especially in the first edition, is carried to all lengths.

The book is an odd assortment of doctrines, 'pigging together, heads and points,' as Burke pleasantly observes of Chatham's government. None of them are original, but the combination is peculiar to Godwin, and has some unity of surface. He tells us a few of the sources of his inspiration. The mind is a blank page, or rather plastic material. And it is unfree; the dogma of metaphysical determinism, taught by the writer's Calvinistic training (he was in turn Calvinist, deist, and atheist), is confirmed by his reading of Hartley and of d'Holbach's *System of Nature*. His psychological dogma is the unlimited power of reason over the emotions, which can be ensured by steady habit in the individual and then will soon become universal in the race. Motives, therefore, can and should be presented in the form, not of emotions or commands, but of arguments. These are, and are to be, the only efficient driving power. Godwin's entire view of the education of the child and the treatment of the criminal follows from this, and is partly taken from Helvétius. He did service by insisting on the element of rational persuasion, but he reduced that of force and discipline to a ludicrous vanishing quantity. Man at large, he proceeds, by a proper concentration on rational motives, can quickly and indefinitely improve. His third dogma, that man is thus perfectible, if only he puts himself under the sway of reason, concurs with that of Condorcet;[1] and it was this, above all, which fired the vision of Shelley. Much, indeed, of *Political Justice* is a parody, which must be read to be believed, of useful and even vital truths. There is still a kind of pallid fire gleaming over the pages, which enables

us to understand its contemporary power. Of the author Hazlitt said in 1825 :

> Five-and-twenty years ago he was in the very zenith of a sultry and unwholesome popularity ; he blazed as a sun in the firmament of reputation ; no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever truth, liberty, justice was the theme, his name was not far off. Now he has sunk below the horizon, and enjoys the serene twilight of a doubtful immortality.

Godwin's notoriety sprang in part from his paradoxical and destructive applications of his notion of 'justice.' The essence of this was, that every man, in the eye of reason, counts for as much as every other, no matter what his relationship may be to you or me. His theory was impersonality run mad. 'Men,' he cries, 'may one day feel that they are partakers of a common nature' ; and he proceeds to conclusions, which are in a style of farce that would have delighted Molière. The famous incredible passage about Fénelon and the chambermaid is the climax. The case is supposed of a fire in the palace of Cambrai. Only one life or the other can be saved.

> Supposing I had been myself the chambermaid, I ought to have chosen to die, rather than that Fénelon should have died. The life of Fénelon was really preferable to that of the chambermaid. . . . Supposing the chambermaid had been my wife, my mother, or my benefactor, this would not alter the truth of the proposition. The life of Fénelon would still be more valuable than that of the chambermaid ; and justice, pure unadulterated justice, would still have preferred that which was most valuable. . . . What magic is there in the pronoun 'my,' to overturn the decisions of everlasting truth ? My wife or my mother may be a fool or a prostitute, malicious, lying, or dishonest. If they be, what consequence is it that they are mine ?

In *St. Leon*, we may remember, Godwin retracted much of this, conceded that 'true wisdom will recommend to us individual attachments,' and commended 'the affections and charities of private life' ; so that he must not be too hotly prosecuted on behalf of the chambermaid. But the same principle of 'justice' lies at the root of his anarchism, which he works out with a tenacity that preserves his memory amongst his successors in that creed.

From Rousseau, from the *philosophes*, and from the events of 1789, Godwin draws his assurance that the great obstacle to the reign of justice is the existence of government, which

'by its nature counteracts the improvement of the individual mind,' and which 'gives substance and permanence to our errors.' Every law and institution partakes in its degree of this evil. Unequal allotment of property is a clear violation of the elementary rights of justice; kings and nobles, popes and bishops, are creatures and begetters of force and injustice. Marriage is a form of monopoly and slavery, and rests on an impulse which the progress of reflection, we learn, will surely weaken; meantime, it has no rational sanction. Make as few laws as possible, nay do not make any more at all. But, he adds, obey those that exist, for violently to resist them is to appeal to violence; argue, until they are all abolished. By a queer circuit and another train of thought Godwin thus reaches the conclusion of his polar opposite, Hobbes, as to the duty of non-resistance. It was this opinion no doubt which, together with the high price of his book, decided Mr. Pitt that he might be left unprosecuted, unlike Paine or Thelwall. His unexpected defence of private property, which he deduces from the abstract right to be free (making a man's goods a kind of extension of his personality), is in the same sense. But behind it all Godwin cherishes no mean dream, of an age when there will be

> no war, no crimes, no administration of justice as it is called, and no government . . . no disease, no anguish, no melancholy, and no resentment. Every man will seek with ineffable ardour the good of all. Mind will be active and eager, yet never disappointed.

He mentions two curious origins for his characteristic views. One is the writings of Swift, which taught him the vanity and corruption of governments; and the other is the 'Latin historians,' from whom he may have drawn his patterns of stoical and passionless virtue. From such far-off sources came, ultimately, some of the sublime forecasts of *Prometheus Unbound*.

Those cool insane pages of *Political Justice* which treat of marriage and the affections contain far less of good sense and sound prophecy than the rambling, superficially turgid *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), by Mary Wollstonecraft[1]: one of the few notable books written by a woman in the cause of her sex. It was published not only before the authoress had accepted Godwin, but before she met Imlay, the brute who lived with her and left her, and her letters to whom, beginning cheerfully and happily, soon become a memorial of affection tragically wrecked. She cannot write, but is all the

more eloquent for that. Had she composed the *Vindication* after her disasters and not before, its chief shortcoming, an inexperience of passion, would have been removed. Mary Wollstonecraft shared with Godwin the faith which they bequeathed to their daughter, Mary Shelley, and to Shelley himself. They all believe in the progress of virtue, the power of reasoning, and the reform of education. Indeed, the 'rights'[1] which Mary Wollstonecraft vindicates are not primarily political or legal, or the right of competition. She wishes women to be 'duly prepared by education to be the companions of men,' and to be 'free to strengthen their reason till they comprehend their duty.' She does not wish them to be otherwise like men; she preaches grace, modesty, dignity, and reserve. But she would have them women and not merely ladies; and in this she goes beyond most of the poetry, fiction, and pedagogy of her day. She is, indeed, something of the doctrinaire when she refuses to attribute 'a sex to mind'; but we still lack a sound psychology of sex; and we wonder the less at her mistake, when she describes the ideals of the authors that revolt her, in her fifth and most valuable chapter, 'Animadversions on some of the writers who have rendered women objects of pity, bordering on contempt.' The clumsy phraseology is characteristic; but we should now agree that these 'writers' are mostly unprofitable, however inconsistent with one another.

In her eyes the worst is of course Rousseau. We are still amazed at the influence of his doctrine when we find it filtering not only into Madame de Staël and the rebels, but into the male and female governesses of young French and English persons—into the works of Madame de Genlis, the *Sermons of* Dr. Fordyce, and Dr. Gregory's *Legacy to his Daughters*: most of whom, in divers tones, extol the passive woman, silent, decorous, accomplished, cunningly and demurely dressed, and of just such a degree of prudery as may both attract and detain a husband. Equally hateful to Mary Wollstonecraft are the cynical counsels of Lord Chesterfield. Her feminine ideal is sound and high, but utterly lacking in play and humour; Miss Burney is outside her view. So is Mlle. de Lespinasse; for Mary Wollstonecraft thinks of love as a passing stimulus to the brain and nature of a woman; love but once, marry then, and 'after marriage let passion calmly subside into friendship.' This is rather too simple, if it is not precisely the language of a 'hyena in petticoats,' as Horace Walpole termed her. Her plea, however, for bringing up girls

together with boys in state-endowed day-schools, for giving them 'a rational affection for their country,' and for saving them from the quackery of fortune-tellers and 'magnetisers,' might have been made a century later without being obsolete. She never came to the fulness of her mind or nature. She died in giving birth to Mary Godwin, afterwards Mary Shelley, and Shelley's tribute to both is famous and just :

> for One then left this earth
> Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
> Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
> Of its departing glory ; still her fame
> Shines on thee.

III

With one sagacious and profoundly satisfactory writer who affects no philosophy, a travelled observer of courage and practical genius, we have the comfort of being on firm earth again. Arthur Young[1] touches literature, nay he belongs to it, by virtue of his *Travels in France* (1792) and his *Autobiography*. These emerge, along with many a stray page in his other travels, pamphlets, and records, from a mass of purely professional and expert writings. He is acknowledged to be the greatest of our authors on agriculture. King George used to take in his carriage a copy of the *Annals of Agriculture*, which Young edited for many years and largely wrote, and professed himself more indebted to him than to any other subject. Napoleon read the *Travels in France* when at Elba. Foreign monarchs and learned bodies rained distinctions upon the author. The *Travels* in two years were translated into French and German, and have been regularly studied in the schools of France. The *Tours* in the southern counties, in the northern counties, in Ireland, in Catalonia, and in Italy have some of the same fascinating quality and of the same scientific and sociological value. The careful and persistent accuracy, the clear method, and the same zest and life, are found in all.

The *Travels in France*, however, which extend over the years 1787-90, are more of a book than any of these. Young would, in vain, have disclaimed being a man of letters. But in the *Travels* he contrasts the plan and arrangement with that of his other *Tours*, in which he had mingled together, rather than blended, the form of the diary and that of the dissertation, with a certain effect of shapelessness. He therefore now placed at the end, in a second section, the essays on

population, commerce, and the like, including the best of all, the famous chapter on the character, causes, and prospects of the Revolution, which is worth more than all the books of all the theorists, Burke's included, and has taken its place as a permanent and trustworthy document. In the first section he preserves, freed from long disquisition, the impressions of travel from day to day, and carries us with him in his ride over almost the whole of France. The charm of the book is in its union of precise and pointed diagnosis, living observation, and indignant British comment; the master-passion of the man, veracity, is in every line; the central thread is his purpose to discover the material basis of the power and resources of France. 'How far were that power and those resources founded on the permanent basis of an enlightened agriculture?'

> These are subjects that will never be understood from the speculations of the mere farmer, or the mere politician; they demand a mixture of both; and the investigation of a mind free from prejudice, particularly national prejudice; from the love of system, and of the vain theories that are to be found in the closets of speculators alone. God forbid that I should be guilty of the vanity of supposing myself thus endowed! I know too well the contrary, and have no other pretension to undertake so arduous a work, than that of having reported the agriculture of England with some little success.

Owing to his plan, to his rigid retrenchment and revision, which he wisely recommends as a practice to authors, and to his life and vivacity, the *Travels* are a book, not for experts or students only, but for all the world; and all the world reads them. The story of Young's speech to the mob that threatened him for not wearing the cockade, which 'a hussy' had pinned on too loosely, is like a scene in Fielding: he told them in imperfect French that in his country the *grands seigneurs* were the taxed, and not the *tiers état*, and commended the method; whereon he was suffered to pass amidst applause, but took care to pin on the next cockade tighter. True courage is shown by his remark that he did not 'half like' the experience. His glimpses of the Assembly and the King, of Mirabeau and Sieyès, are most lively. He watches the dress, the buildings, the scenery, the vintages, the cultivation, the flowers, the table manners, the looks of the women (whom he did not disregard), the varieties of sport, the public works and undertakings, with a Baconian passion for avoiding prejudice and seeing things as they were. He does not aim at style, but attains it by his terseness and instinctive choice of language;

writes in a varying, gusty fashion, sometimes jotting mere notes, sometimes running on for a longer disquisition; and reserves his more serried and formal manner, with suggestions of a set eloquence which is not unsuccessful, for his dissertations.

Young was never in love with the Revolution; he simply described its actual causes, and was shocked and carried away by its effects. In the moment of anti-Jacobin panic, he suggested and pressed the institution of the national militia. It is sad to read his admirable autobiography. His days darkened; his personal rewards and honours came too late, and bereavement too soon. Gradually he found 'true evangelical religion' of a narrow self-tormenting type, and reproached himself with some innocent pleasures. But he admitted the solace that was offered by the news of his own fame and by the sense of having done a mighty stroke of work for his beloved agriculture.

To a reader fresh from Burke, Jeremy Bentham [1] may at first seem to be his exact opposite; a child of the pure stock of the 'enlightenment,' and a fellow of Paine or Godwin. He shares in their destructive and simplifying spirit. He has no respect for history; the longer a social fabric, with its justifying formulæ, has existed, the more suspicious is Bentham of its title. To him the past is chiefly a series of incrusted errors. Art and poetry are idle things; the dogmatic and the mystical sides of religion, and still more its organised embodiments, rest upon traditional phrases that are themselves in the nature of 'fictitious entities.' The British law and constitution are not a stately tree sanctified by growth and use, but a tangle of old roots that sterilise the ground. Some of the supposed key-words of ethical science, like duty and virtue, are obstructions to clear thinking and to human welfare. 'In the penal code,' says Bentham, 'having for its principle the greatest happiness principle, no such word would have place.' The word in question is 'mercy.' But he means that mercy is superfluous, if the award of justice is already based on a true calculation of the 'greatest happiness': and he wrote with impressive effect at first against the abuse, and latterly against the use, of capital punishment.[2] This handling of the past and of existing institutions is in the spirit that Burke abhorred; the spirit, namely, of logical dissection and of judgment by reference to a formula.

But if we come to Bentham from the *philosophes* themselves—from Godwin, or from Condorcet, or from Helvétius [3] (whom Bentham in his youth so much admired, that he thought

of offering to be his servant)—he seems almost a conservative. His treatment of the dream of human perfectibility is enough to separate him from the pure doctrinaires. Even when law and commerce are reformed, armies disbanded, and revolutions no longer needed, it will only mean the 'absence of a certain quantity of evil.' Jealousy, hatred, pain, and poverty will always be, says Bentham, with us. 'Let us seek only what is attainable; it presents a career sufficiently vast for genius.' He disbelieves in many other extreme tenets; treats the Declaration of Independence and the doctrines of 'natural rights' and 'natural equality' with contempt, as a tissue of confusions; thinks that the equalisation of goods by the state would be upset in a month by competition; and considers woman[1] a domestic rather than a political animal, requiring, indeed, much protection, but normally under the governance of the husband 'because he is the stronger.' His bent, after all, is English and towards the concrete, though he refers all things to his principle of utility, as Malebranche saw all things in God. If he is blind to the past, he has a practical and detailed vision of the future. He forestalls some points of Chartism, and the radical programme of the nineteenth century; pleads for universal suffrage, for yearly parliaments, and also for the payment of members, which in this country was enacted only yesterday. Bentham's purpose is reform; and above all, to use a word of his own coinage, it is codification. Godwin and Paine thought nothing out; Bentham, in a terminology that is often grotesque but always an attempt to wrestle with the facts, is minute in reconstruction. Many of his ideas are embodied in enactments that are now taken for granted. He is a man of science, and has influenced the life of the nation, through its law, perhaps more than any other theorist. Strictly speaking, it is Benthamism,[2] or Bentham's theory worked out by his followers, that has had this effect. But in the union of critical courage and reorganising instinct no other thinker of our revolutionary age can approach him.

Bentham's work as a jurist, therefore, concerns the historians of legal science and reform. He was not such a historian himself, and is nothing akin to his great younger contemporary, Savigny. He is the head and fountain of our codifying school of lawyers. His place as a philosopher, in the stricter sense, is less assured, but he deeply affected insular speculation. With pure metaphysic he is not concerned, it is to him a quarrel over hollow names. His formula[3] of the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number' is a good working one for law, but on

its speculative side it is tentative; and his moral psychology, though elaborately outlined, omits some of the chief actual springs of human endeavour. His importance as a moralist is to be studied in his expounders and elaborators. But Bentham has also a real if an odd and anomalous interest for the student of letters.

He wrote two of his most fruitful and distinctive books before the Revolution. *A Fragment on Government*,[1] which attacks Blackstone's idolatrous theory of the constitution, came out anonymously in 1776. This trenchant pamphlet by an obscure lawyer under thirty was credited to Lord Mansfield and other ripe authorities. The disclosure of the authorship launched Bentham in the political, and even the fashionable world, under the auspices of Lord Shelburne and the advance-guard of the Whig party; and this society he describes with the sharp quaint vigour that distinguishes the *Fragment* itself. The pedantry of systematic and enormous subdivision, which afterwards defaced his treatises, is still latent, and it was a fault he could at any time fling off when he made the effort. It is present, though his special crabbed terminology has not yet appeared, in *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, which was published in 1789, having lain ready printed for nine years. This work contains the bedrock of his philosophy; he built upon it afterwards, but never swerved from its fundamental positions. Bentham founds all human action, both as it is and as it 'ought' to be, on 'two sovereign masters, pleasure and pain,' which he treats as ultimate terms defying definition and needing none; works out, imperturbably and amazingly, his famous 'calculus,' defining good, virtue, and everything else, as a balance struck between pain and pleasure, as computed in the long run and rightly understood; and jumps, with equal coolness, to his identification of the good of each man with the good of all, that is, with 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' In laying down this 'universal measure of right and wrong,' he passes from morals to legislation, which, as he well puts it, has the 'same centre as morals, but not the same circumference'; and sketches out his conception of punishment as preventive and exemplary, but not vindictive. This theory is one of his titles to glory, and has powerfully affected English law. *The Defence of Usury* (written 1787), one of his most lively and influential books, was written during a visit to Russia. He composed much that he did not publish,[2] and the titles of his works number more than seventy. *Discourses on Civil and*

Penal Legislation, A Treatise on Judicial Evidence, Anarchical Fallacies, and *Chrestomathia* figure amongst them.

The form and style of his writings change visibly with time. Bentham becomes less and less desirous of a general audience ; his tone is less that of the disputant, and increasingly analytic and scientific ; he speaks more to the experts and to himself. Often he cares no more for the amenities of literature, or to be readable, than a chemist or zoologist. Many of his treatises, instead of printing them, he put in a drawer, and left to his devotees to edit and beat into presentable shape. Of those that he published, the most important only reached the lay reader by a strange circuit. Bentham was early famous in France, and was made a French citizen in 1792. He corresponded with the leaders of liberal thought in many countries. Much of his fame was due to the labours of his admirer, the Genevese Étienne Dumont, whose recasts in French [1] of Bentham's codifying and reforming treatises gave them immense currency. Cleared of bristling scholastic terms, and presented in a neater Gallic dress, they penetrated far, and were again translated into many languages, including English. Thus the *Traité de Législation,* a digest of various works and manuscripts, is current in an English retranslated version, which is not from Bentham's own hand. In other cases the process is more direct ; the *Rationale of Judicial Evidence* was edited from his manuscripts by John Stuart Mill.

Bentham thus touches literature in several ways. Many of his earlier and some of his later works are in a plain, hard-hitting, sarcastic idiom. But he also theorised on style and language in the spirit of a radical reformer, though his purpose was scientific and not artistic. He is, like Hobbes, a nominalist in grain, deeply preoccupied with the delusions inherent in daily language and bent on dispelling them. Phrases like the ' will of God,' the ' law of nature,' and ' the social compact,' he treats as venerable impostures that are to be unmasked and left shivering before the world. But he has not, like Hobbes, the use of Latin and the sense of classical style to keep him a true man of letters. His master-passion is to define, reduce, distinguish, bifurcate, and simplify. He wishes the names of the human impulses and virtues, and the key-words of philosophy, and the various compartments of political theory, to have a meaning and value precise as avoirdupois. The common standard he finds in his master-phrases of utility and the general happiness. These cannot themselves be weighed ; they are ultimate ; they are the weights themselves, like the

standard pounds and ounces in the Mint. In his curious and instructive *Table of the Springs of Human Action* he tries to classify the *names* of the motives and moral qualities of mankind, in order to see for what real entities there are no words, or no single words, in the language. Thus there are no such names for the virtuous opposites of avarice and anger ; we have to say 'just resentment,' and the like. And there prove to be many more names for bad things than for good ones. Bentham does not draw cynical inferences, but muses on the poverty of speech, and if he does not invent the missing words, it is evident that he would like to do so. In matters of education and science he does not shrink from the process. Everywhere his aim is to find an unchangeable meaning for each term. In jurisprudence, where haloes are not marketable and atmosphere is not evidence, this tendency does more good than harm.

It is easy to see what is lost, if we once assume that words have no indefinable associations. The keyboard of expression becomes limited, nor is the want made good by the barbarous-sounding compounds of Bentham's later works. These have been much mocked and deplored, but they may easily be judged in a wrong spirit. He was only doing what men of science do every day. He makes up compounds from Greek and Latin and English to express some new conception or branch of knowledge, which only thus comes to be realised. If our schools of tropical medicine have not adopted the term 'phthisozoics' for the science concerned with the destruction of noxious organisms, they might have done so. Sometimes he unconsciously plays the part of an English Aristophanes. Certainly his Greek words are not so bad as some of the English equivalents that he sets beside them. 'Catastaticochrestic' looks well beside 'established-use-affording,' and 'cœnonesioscopic' is better than 'communication-regarding.' Sometimes we have only the English. In his 'Chrestomathic Instruction-table,' an interesting sketch of a pattern education, comes the expression 'balbutient recollection-assisting repetition-prohibiting.' This seems to mean that we must not let a stammering child repeat his words as an aid to memory. It has often been noted that not all Bentham's terms are of this kind. A few, though ugly, have made themselves necessary ; nay, they are the first clear expression of some new idea which has gained a wider life through their use. The word 'international,' by its very existence, has done something for mankind ; and so has 'codify.' 'Minimize' has become

regular though learned English, while 'maximize' has made less way. Bentham's playful expressions, like 'virtuous soup' and 'plausible potatoes,' also express real ideas; but these are in the nature of epigram. 'Deontology,'[1] a needless synonym for ethics, and the title of one of his books, is not nearly so apt, and has not survived.

He does not hesitate to lay down the law about style, and his canons are what would be expected. They are found in some of the old rhetoricians, and in the plainer writers of our classical age. A copious store of right words, clearness, simplicity, condensation, and, lowest of all, mere melodiousness and 'pronunciability'—these are the virtues, in order of merit, of the sound writer. To the last, when he chose, he practised them himself, and could turn out a vivid apologue or appeal, abrupt and effective enough; and his recorded conversation shows the same qualities, being racy, explosive, whimsical, and shrewd. It is a pity he had no better Boswell than Sir John Bowring, the first editor of the *Westminster Review*, which Bentham founded in 1824, and to which we return hereafter (Ch. XIII.).

Outside jurisprudence and political science Bentham exerted no influence on foreign thought. At home, on the contrary, he left a profound trace, and also gave endless provocation. He was, at any rate, the cause of literature in others. John Stuart Mill has left the clearest and fairest estimate of his powers, which is all the more effective for being the view of an escaped Benthamite. The most fallacious and unintelligent of the attacks upon him may be read in *Sartor Resartus*, where his creed is pelted with mud and called 'pig-philosophy.' This unluckily is not the mere *fatrasie* of a humourist, but the sincere outburst of a man who was unable by nature to form, or even to value, a distinct philosophical conception. The mighty wave of Carlyle's influence, and its general beneficence, need not be questioned; but it may be asked which of the two men did more for public justice and the wellbeing of the world. Bentham's incapacity for certain of the higher reaches of the human spirit was, no doubt, somewhat rigid. But he had a single great idea, and cast it into a thousand fruitful forms. His limitations are too plain to harm any mortal, and he had in a high degree the philosopher's passion for truth and clearness at all costs. In common life he was not a pedant, but quite a human queer old patriarch,[2] warm-blooded and entertaining. He was no acrid ironbound doctrinaire like his disciple James Mill, and was free from the painful self-centred-

ness and solemnity of Herbert Spencer. There is more human nature in him than in William Paley[1] (1745-1805), the popular divine, with whom he has some affinities more obvious than deeply rooted.

IV

Paley is colder than Bentham, and has none of his initiative ; he belongs as clearly to his own age as Bentham to the future ; or rather he gives an epitome, in superior form, of a number of current ideas that had long been converging towards the kind of scheme that Paley constructs. His leading ideas are derivative.[2] He is the great populariser of the mechanical theory of the universe, with its 'argument from contrivance' on the one side, and its 'theological utilitarianism' on the other. 'I make no pretence,' he says, 'to perfect originality ; I claim to be something more than a mere compiler.' He is not a mere compiler, neither has he a really synthetic mind ; he is an eclectic, with a passion for the assurance of logical completeness. He pieces together, most honestly, the various elements of his system into a single fabric, and throws upon them so clear a daylight that the weaknesses in the stitching do not easily escape notice. He was accepted in England as the official defender of the faith and teacher of the young, though he has had no lasting hold even upon insular thought. One of his works at once became, and another still remains, an official text-book in Cambridge, his own university. The isolation of the English mind at this period could not be better exemplified. The *Moral and Political Philosophy* appeared in 1785, between the first and the second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant's great work was not to find, as a whole, an English dress for half a century. But Paley, as we shall see, can by no means be left out of the history of literature.

His other chief works, *Horæ Paulinæ* (1790), *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), and *Natural Theology* (1802) are designed to form, with the *Moral and Political Philosophy*, a coherent scheme. Paley worked backwards, and in each successive work (counting the *Horæ* and the *Evidences* together), strove to make good the presuppositions of the last. The keystone of the *Philosophy* is his famous 'otherworldliness,' or theory of far-sighted self-regard, which rests the ultimate inducement to virtue and deterrent from misdoing upon the certainty of posthumous reward and punishment. The credibility of revealed religion is thus taken for granted, and his next two treatises are devoted to marshalling the

historical and inductive evidence for the Christian religion, the proof from miracles and 'undesigned coincidences,' and the probability of just such a revelation being needed and given as the world in fact received. But miracles, and the reading of history they involve, he by no means presents as proving the truths of natural religion: on the contrary, they largely presuppose those truths. Accordingly, in his *Natural Theology*, Paley, 'taking his stand on human anatomy' principally, develops his conception of the universe as a well-contrived machine, set and kept going by the maker of whose existence it is the invincible proof.

It is not for us to examine these reasonings, which no doubt now seem remote enough to most theologians. Paley's calculation of pleasures and pains, which links him with Bentham, who has been called 'Paley minus a belief in hell-fire'[1]; his lack of sense for the continuity of social institutions, which separates him in his own age from Burke; his conception of society as fixed once for all, and of a single form of revelation as vitally dissociated from all others; and his indifference to metaphysics, are enough to antiquate Paley as a thinker. But a curious distinctive view of human life and character comes out in the course of his argument. He represents a type of mind that we have all met and that seems likely to last long in this country; without vision, imagination or passion, but candid, and determined to find no rest till it has found a comfortable formula; with its conclusions in favour of established ideas and institutions unconsciously prejudged from the first. Such persons are sometimes misnamed optimists, but Paley, their type, is a strangely qualified optimist,[2] and does not like the term. In his eyes this is by no means the best of all possible worlds—the truths of salvation *might* have been made much plainer; the beasts do devour one another, and though this keeps down 'superfecundity,' it is not in itself productive of a balance of pleasure, any more than wars and plagues. The provision of venom for the serpent, though it may be useful to himself, may well appear, as Paley oddly says, 'overdone.' There *may*, all the same, if we only knew, be really a 'strict system of optimism,' and in any case there is an immense balance of happiness in the world, and the exceptions do not bulk large enough to make it improbable that there is design everywhere, and that the design is good. He rises to a real, if rather complacent eloquence in his picture of the 'happy living things' in the enjoyment of their life; and in Wordsworth and Coleridge, it must be remembered, we find something

of the same temper transformed into a sympathy and rapture which 'no tongue can declare.' Even the sober Paley is here on the brink of romance. But he soon pulls himself up. In his shrinking from 'enthusiasm'[1] he is of the eighteenth century, for it was not only the men of science and sceptics, but the whole settled English caste, scholarly, professional, and even literary, that shared in that aversion. Paley goes to listen to the Methodists, and does not doubt that their emotions do them good, or that 'conversion' is necessary for certain classes of sinners, and that it is a real phenomenon; but, when pressed, he reduces it simply to a 'revolution of principle,' that is, of behaviour; and no one who is not a very great sinner need be unhappy because he does not feel those emotions.

In one well-known passage this temper of Paley's becomes ludicrous. Christ, he says, was quite unlike the Methodists. *He* was not marked by 'impassioned devotion'; there was no undue 'heat in His piety'; on the contrary, He was a person of much 'moderation and soundness of judgment'; and the priceless 'negative qualities of our religion, as it came out of the hands of its founder,' are thus highly authorised. Christ, in fact (we might comment), is not an Oriental at all, but, whilst undoubtedly divine, is on the human side a signally judicious and unemotional dignitary, who has profited not a little by a reading of Locke. Paley, it is fair to say, both in his sermons and in the peroration to his *Evidences*, leaves this point of view far behind, and is touched for once by the sense of 'strangeness in beauty' when he reviews the appeal made by Christianity to the world, in contrast with its low beginnings.

But the virtues of his regular style, which are remarkable, reflect his steady temper. His writing is as clear as the water standing in a tank. We see down to the hard metallic floor. He took great pains over his form, and had much the same ideals in that respect as Godwin, his mental opposite—the ideals of concise elegance and of a pointedness not overdone, which belong to the barer Georgian prose. He writes, however, better than Godwin, partly because he is a better scholar, and partly because he aims at popularity. In fact, Paley's purpose is that old one of the Royal Society, to be 'as near the mathematical plainness as we can.' He has a plain, undeniable, parsonic sense, and even raciness. His diction is very free from pedantry; it is rare that we come on such terms as *versute*, *prepollency*, *obmutescence*, or *prejudication*. In the preface to his *Moral Philosophy* he explains his prin-

ciples of style, and he acts up to them. He wishes to be read ; he will not practise the short, disjointed, fatiguing aphoristic manner—and here he is thinking perhaps of Montesquieu ; nor will he refine overmuch, or deal in minute divisions and distinctions, like a schoolman ; nor will he perplex his page, like Grotius and the great legists, with technical 'forensic' matter, or traffic in 'cant' unanalysed phrases such as 'natural rights' ; but will 'attemper' the excellences of these various methods, and come home to his hearers. In the same way he advises the youthful preacher to be neither too vague nor too minute, but to aim at a 'decent particularity.' The result may be open to the reproach that Nietzsche cast against John Stuart Mill, of an almost 'affronting clearness' ; and to refresh our conception of lucidity as a philosophic virtue we must turn to Berkeley or to Schopenhauer. But Paley, if not an artist, is a noticeably careful and pleasing craftsman in prose, and the chainwork of argument in his *Horæ Paulinæ* shows him to be a master of exposition.

The most original and fertile disciple of Bentham, James Mill[1] (1773-1836), is best remembered as a man of letters for his *History of British India* (1817 ; see *post*, Ch. XXIV.) ; otherwise he belongs chiefly to the history of English philosophy. On psychology and political economy he left an imprint, and he was not only a producer but a powerful agent in the distribution of ideas. He began his career as the lieutenant and interpreter of Bentham, in the *Edinburgh Review* and other journals. By his articles (1814) in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* he put into wide circulation the reformer's legal and political ideas. His rigid precision of language, and incessant scrutiny of the sense of current terms, also served him well in his *Elements of Political Economy* (1821), an exposition of the thoughts of Ricardo, and a good example of his simplifying and syllogistic method ; but with the decline of the deductive school of reasoning its importance decreased. His *Analysis of the Human Mind* (1829) was of great note in the development of the associational theory, reverting as it does to Hartley and going behind the assumptions of the later Scottish writers. It is a very compact and lucid survey of mental anatomy from the earlier standpoint of the school. Mill shares with Brown, and possesses in even higher measure, the passion for getting to the root of current words, and, so to speak, deflating them of their vague and distracting connotations ; a habit of mind, as already noticed, characteristic of the English genius. Hence James Mill's style gives

a certain intellectual pleasure ; it is bare, dry, rigid, and simple, running to short impatient sentences, as though he wished to shake his reader by the shoulders. He failed, as we know, wholly to shake the life out of his son, John Stuart Mill, but did not leave him unscathed. The filial tributes in the son's *Autobiography*, and in his edition (1869) of the *Analysis*, remain the best and fairest description of James Mill's mind and temper. In his view of human feeling and imagination, and of all that ministers to them, he is the most impossible of the doctrinaires in an age of doctrine. He went all the lengths of his type ; but he was a soldier in the intellectual war of much integrity and valour, and also a servant of public justice.

By now the ideas of 1792 have been left far out of sight, and the distance of Bentham and his group from the theorists who were at war with Burke is significant enough. The programme of legal, political and educational reform, working through existing means, and sapping in a stubborn but orderly way the fabric of abuses, has supplanted the doctrine of a clean sweep. Advance is seen to be a slow affair, not to be contrived by mere subversion. At the same time, the notion of suddenly altering the individual for the better by the mere removal of the institutions he has built around himself, has become chimerical. He is still, it is true, regarded as primarily a reasoning and calculating animal ; and the later, like the earlier school, is seen at times heading straight for bankruptcy, owing to an impoverished and unimaginative view of human nature. This sort of rationalism is a legacy from the eighteenth century—a kind of wedge driven by it into the nineteenth. Still there is a change of attitude ; man is seen to be a prudential creature, following the least painful course of action, rather than a rational one who balances the good and ill that he may cause to his fellows. The old optimism is not extinguished, but noticeably tempered. All this speculation, be it remembered, goes on by the side of the poets and dreamers and observers who, for their part, are meanwhile representing mankind quite otherwise, but who appropriate the ideas of the philosophers intermittently. Real life, and the human drama, and also romance, will come presently into view again. But one other theorist of great and not merely passing influence, whose name has contributed an epithet to the language, must briefly be noticed.

The first edition of the *Essay on Population* of Thomas Robert Malthus[1] appeared in 1798, as a counterblast to the

notion of Godwin and Condorcet that mankind, given certain political changes, can advance at a hand-gallop towards perfection. But what, said Malthus, if man 'tends' always to multiply quicker than his food can increase in abundance? And what if he is only kept back by evil forces, by internecine tendencies, by war and by his own vices, from thus reaching famine-point? If that greater evil is only staved off by these lesser but still considerable ones, what of human perfectibility then? Already multitudes live all too near the 'margin of subsistence,' and are kept from sinking below it by a vicious circle of Poor Law charities. After launching this missile Malthus travelled, and in 1803 produced an almost wholly new edition of his book, not only stiffened by an array of figures drawn from different countries, but modified by a new and more hopeful consideration. Man, he now says, can practise 'moral restraint'; he can remain celibate longer and also chaste longer (or at any rate not less so than before); and when he marries he can arrange, by the practice of self-control, not to have too many mouths to feed. The fatal law still remains which determines the difference between the increase of population in a geometrical, and that of food in an arithmetical ratio—but this can be counteracted in part by the self-discipline recommended. Then the operative will be surer to secure due work and a due wage—a prospect that leaves much more hope for the Benthamite campaign of law reform and reasonable education, seeing that there will not be too many unfed persons to profit by the results.

All this, here most rudely summarised, rests, so the economists tell us, on many unproved assumptions, the great fundamental law of ratios itself being largely erroneous; while, again, so far as accurate, it was no discovery on the part of Malthus, being forestalled, as he himself often proclaims, by earlier pens; and was rather a restatement, in telling form and in technical phrase, of things generally known but little realised. Yet the name and some of the prestige of Malthus have persisted. This is probably more due to his shrewd and pointed presentment of the problem of the individual, which is always with us, than to his doubtful general proposition concerning the law of food-supply and population. At the time, he found unexpected allies and adversaries. He was hailed by philosophical Radicals for the reason given, and also by pessimists who refused to see any hope of the artisan exercising self-control, as well as by Tories, who were relieved to think that his straits were his own fault after all.

Cobbett, on the other hand, continually jeered at 'parson Malthus,' from the point of view of a hearty Briton who held that the more healthy young people the better, with the New World to fall back upon. Cobbett, however, cared little for any reasoned theory: and it is of more consequence to remember that Darwin received from reading Malthus the first impulse to muse upon the struggle for existence. In his conception of life as a state of somewhat gloomy probation, in which personal success and comfort depend on self-control, Malthus chimes in with Paley.

The writings of the chief economist of the period, David Ricardo,[1] such as those on currency and banking, and the *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817), belong wholly to the history of his own science, and are poor in literary or human interest. He is the great representative of his own method, that of the rigid and acute deduction of consequences from an abstract economic theorem, and is a close and serried writer. He derives in part from Malthus, especially in respect of his once-famous theory of rent, and was closely associated with James Mill. Ricardo's natural sympathies with his brother-capitalists are not a little modified by his league with the Radicals; and he scornfully denies[2] that the rights of property would be imperilled by a moderate extension of the franchise. He was largely responsible for formulating the notion of the 'economic man,' who is guided by pure profit and loss considerations; and though he admits that such a being is an abstraction, he leaves it to others to make good the missing elements in their application to real life. Indeed, these rival diagrams of human nature form the chief interest of the economists to our chronicle. As it has been well said of the earlier contrast between the pictures of Godwin and Malthus:

> The purely rational being, emancipated from sex and from death, was confronted with a creature of appetite who lived only to eat and to generate.

The name of Robert Owen, the once famed socialist, philanthropist, and founder of infant schools, finds even less place in the chronicle of letters. His *New View of Society* (1813-6) and his *Book of the New Moral World* are unoriginal in thought; he announces as a high discovery that the will is not free, that rewards and punishments are wrong, that the child is wholly plastic, and that reason and kindness are the means of education. The interest of these tenets lies purely in Owen's

practical application of them, which was remarkable; and his style is heavy, clumsy, and iterative, in spite of his high importance in the history of social and co-operative effort. He is named here, however, as a late survivor of the pure-blooded doctrinaires.

It may seem wrong to speak of William Cobbett [1] (1763-1835) in this chapter, for he has no doctrine; or rather, he runs through a whole course of doctrines, which are less the fruits of thinking than of feeling, passion, and observation, and in the end fall into a motley enough array. But Cobbett in one way was a son of the Revolution, who only came after many years to know his own parentage and found his feet by revolting against the reaction in which at first he shared. He became the most powerful and sonorous Radical of his time, bellowing against privilege, and 'fundlords,' and judicial inhumanities, and clerical reactionaries, and the neglect of the poor, until he was the most popular and the best-hated man in England. At the same time, he was leagues apart from the theorists of the age preceding, and at many points retained traces of the 'counter-revolution'; his material, for one thing, being hard concrete facts and figures, and not theory at all; while, for another, he had no sentimental abstract love for the people, from whom he sprang, but the candid eye for their faults and brutal tongue of a fellow-artisan. Like Arthur Young, he cares not for ideas but for *things*; and like him is a faithful and most vivid describer of things; although, once he quits the object, he can be, unlike Young, wholly reckless in his inferences and applications. As a writer, he is in a different class altogether from any of the men of doctrine; he excels them all, he excels every one named in the present chapter and the last, save only Burke. With Cobbett we get back to real literature.

He must have written as much as Defoe, and the two have many of the same virtues—plainness, brevity of phrase, instinctive rightness of diction and idiom, and the power of gaining the ear of all who understand the English language. Cobbett has a complete notion of the mind and passions of the ordinary man, and of the words that will reach him quickest. Much of his immense body of production is journalism, perfectly designed for such a purpose; but it is journalism continually rising into art; it is interspersed with sallies of invective, description, eloquence, and even pathos. His best pages are thus scattered far and wide, and he did not more than once or twice—in his *Advice to Young Men*, in the *Rural Rides*,

in his *Life and Adventures of Peter Porcupine*, make a real book ; differing thus from Defoe, who has far more cunning and economy in composition, though he is destitute of Cobbett's cordial warmth and loudness, and is as secretive as Cobbett is expansive.

The writings of Cobbett have never been collected, and there is no recounting them here. He has taken care, in a hundred dispersed passages, to be the leading authority for his own life, and when he is telling of it he writes his best. His childhood, his scanty schooling, the awakening of his spirit by the perusal of *A Tale of a Tub*, his existence in an attorney's office and then as a sergeant-major in New Brunswick, his first return home, his accusations against his officers, his life as a bookseller in Philadelphia, his quarrels and libel actions, his second return in 1800, at once to be welcomed by the Tories and banqueted by Pitt and Canning, but soon to quarrel with the Government ;—all this adventure he relates, unsurpassably in his way, with all his brazen bravery of heart and tongue, his invincible confidence, his cheerful and colossal one-sidedness. In 1801 he published the *Works of Peter Porcupine*, in twelve volumes, which contain his first ten years' work as an author—tracts aimed against his military superiors, against Priestley and Paine, against his adversaries in America. *A Bone to Gnaw for the Democrats* and *A Kick for a Bite* are exemplary titles. He is already as rabid as he will ever be, which is much to say ; but he will soon be as rabid on the other side. His so-called Tory phase comes to an end ; and for complex and still disputed reasons [1]—partly conviction, partly self-interest, partly pique—Cobbett becomes an Anti-Pittite, and commences professional reformer. His letters to Lord Hawkesbury in 1801, and to Addington, give a premonition of this change. Next year he founds the famous journal, *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, which lasts until 1835 ; an amazing enterprise, carried through mostly single-handed, amidst all manner of trials and obstacles, and the source, above all else, of his ultimate power in the country. He also started, in 1806, *Cobbett's Parliamentary History*, which was carried on partly by deputy. But the *Register* is the hunting-ground for many of Cobbett's opinions and his reminiscences, and it took up his best energies for nearly twenty years. Most of this time, but for his two years' sojourn in Newgate, he spent on his estate at Botley, which he has many times delightfully described. He wrote his popular and amusing though highly dogmatic *English Grammar* (1818), and another sketch—this

time a favourable one—of Tom Paine. *A Year's Residence in the United States* is the journal of his third visit (1817-18), and, though ostensibly a 'guide to farmers,' and concerned with planting, sowing, and selling, includes some of his liveliest divagations—on American topers, on Hampshire parsons, and on the Reform agitation at home. With Cobbett anything can lead to anything; and his odd invective against potatoes, considered as a fashionable food, easily carries him away into a scold against that other superstitious habit of the British race, its admiration for William Shakespeare.

The last fifteen years of Cobbett's life (1820-35) were not less stirring and combative. He held the pen for Queen Caroline; he quarrelled with O'Connell; he was tried in the King's Bench for encouraging arson by his writings, and got off; in 1831 he advocated the creation of new peers, and sat, somewhat ineffectually, in Parliament. He journeyed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and his *Rural Rides* (1830) and his *Tour in Scotland* are the result—a most living chronicle. He threw off works like *Cottage Economy* and *Advice to Gardeners*; but his *Advice to Young Men and Young Women* (1830) was his greatest, while his virulent, vivid, and partisan *History of the Protestant Reformation in England* (1824-5) was probably his most popular book. In his last years he produced a *Legacy to Labourers* and a *Legacy to Parsons*; for Cobbett's loves and hatreds knew no flagging while the breath was in him.

The *Advice to Young Men and Young Women* is one of the most telling of English lay sermons; it is also a mirror of Cobbett's heart and creed, and one of the prime authorities for his life. The writing is as personal in its way as De Quincey's or Lamb's. Cobbett has a faithful and jealous memory for the least incidents of his life; he still is young in heart himself, though nearing sixty; he is closer than anybody to common, fighting, working, multiplying humanity. He does not 'only talk of population.' He loathes Malthus, and man-midwives, and inoculation, and many other necessary or useful things. He is defiantly unromantic, and 'deprecates' the reading of romance, and in the next breath he tells, incomparably well, the romance of his own courtship. He is resplendently cheerful and abominably healthy. His morality is tough, sound, coarse, and fibrous; and it is never quite commonplace, owing to his sharp observation and rough comic insight. He may not be 'spiritual' or 'distinguished'; it would take chapters to say what Cobbett's work is not; but here, at any rate, is certainly literature.

Unawares, Cobbett often reminds us in his counsels of the old manuals of behaviour, which were common in late Renaissance times and were a kind of poor relation of the more exalted 'courtesy-books.' He does not, of course, try, like the author of the *Galateo*, to form a gentleman, a thoroughly presentable person; but simply a young farmer, tradesman, or professional man; and he is not first of all concerned with his manners. He tells him how to bear himself in the successive and primary relations of life—as a 'youth,' a 'lover,' a 'husband,' a 'father,' and a 'citizen.' The 'Advice to a Lover' tells us much about Cobbett himself. It is blunt enough, but shrewd and warm-blooded in temper. He despises a 'provident frigidity,' and young men who fear to take risks. Love may sometimes be a fatal passion, and in any case is a thing lying beyond reason; but anything is better than 'bargain and sale,' or marrying for money and ambition. Why, Buonaparte mated for ambition, and behold the fruits! Cobbett dearly loves to prophesy by way of hypothesis, and here he exceeds himself; had Buonaparte married 'the poorest and prettiest girl in all France,' he 'would in all probability have now [1830] been on an imperial throne, instead of being eaten by worms at the bottom of a very deep hole in St. Helena.' This is something for Hampshire lads to think upon, before they proceed to learn the eight requirements demanded by Cobbett in a wife. It is enough to name his racy reasons for the last of these, namely beauty, omitting his praises of industry, frugality, good temper, and the like. A beautiful woman, for one thing, is less likely to 'fall,' having so many more admirers than a plain one. She is likelier to keep her man faithful; she costs less to dress than a plainer mate; and, moreover, the troubles of life are so many, and are such 'powerful dampers of the passions,' that it 'requires something, and a good deal too, to keep' the husband 'pleased with his bargain.' The last and most inimitable reason is this—that whereas only a brute will slight the wife whom he has chosen, because of her want of looks, but whereas men in general do 'hardly act with justice in such a case,' the best course is 'to guard against such a temptation,' and 'not to marry any one you do not think handsome.' O shades of the makers of *Epipsychidion* and the *Ode to Melancholy*! This contemporary of yours knows something that you do not know, though of *your* heavens and hells and purgatories he has less than no conception! But then he is not your contemporary: he is really of the century before you; and how cheering for us, in

the year 1830, to be able to call once more for justice to the eighteenth century, and to propose its health, coupled with the name of Mr. Cobbett! Yet again, he has his own kind of romance: for what else is his picture of his inner conflict between his loyalty to 'the poor little brunette in England,' his future wife, and the charm of the fair young New Brunswick lady, a 'bouquet of lilies and roses, with her long light hair twisted nicely up'? With her he had 'jaunted,' and with her he might have stopped, lost to fame. But he stuck to home, and duty, and happiness, and persecution, and glory; and otherwise, he adds, 'I, unapplauded, unfeared, unenvied, and uncalumniated, should have lived and died'—in the backwoods of New Brunswick. This it is to have a good conscience, and to be Cobbett.

He is a self-satisfied and thorough Tory in matters domestic, and leagues away from Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft. Women have a sacred right—to a most patient hearing. There are, indeed, duties on both sides. Let the young husband stay at home, avoid 'sotting clubs,' and mind the baby, heedless of ridicule, in consideration of 'what a young woman gives up on her wedding day'; but let him insist on 'dutiful deportment,' and let him 'control if necessary' the wife's tongue, and also any inclination to form 'female *comités*' of sympathisers; but let him decide all things of moment, ay, and decide them *right*. If his wife is unfaithful, let him be utterly merciless, and show her the door—and here Cobbett gets red, and British, and rhetorical,—the very pattern of the man described by Heine, who saw him at a famous meeting at the 'Crown and Anchor' in 1827, and detested him. Yet his testimony to his own wife is a noble and a touching one; and the long, rolling sentence, poured out in one breath, may be quoted for its own sake, and also as showing, perhaps, Cobbett's English at its acme:

> Love came and rescued me from this horrible slavery; placed the whole of my time at my own disposal; made me free as air; removed every restraint upon the operations of my mind, naturally disposed to communicate its thoughts to others; and gave me for my leisure hours a companion, who, though deprived of any opportunity of acquiring what is called learning, had so much good sense, so much useful knowledge, was so innocent, so just in all her ways, so pure in thought, word, and deed, so disinterested, so generous, so devoted to me and her children, so free from all disguise, and withal so beautiful and so talkative, and in a voice so sweet, so cheering, that I must, seeing the health and the capacity which it

had pleased God to give me, have been a criminal, if I had done much less than that which I have done ; and I have always said, that if my country feel any gratitude for my labours, that gratitude is due to her full as much as to me.

In his talk upon education Cobbett often recalls Locke, although he has a different class of pupil in mind, and thinks of the training of farmers, not of leisured gentry. But both of them love detail, and write from experience, and are sound naturalists when studying the young male animal, and are kindly and humane. Cobbett, however, is to the last more of a child himself than Locke can at any age have been. He has a robust and sound view of what the young citizen ought to be like. He wants a nation of big men, fighters who have grown up from a lusty, turbulent infancy ; who have lived from the first on sweet air, and exercise, and plain food ; who have not been driven to books, or debarred from them ; who have grown up not at school but at home, if possible with a boisterous, ingenious, affectionate sort of William Cobbett for a parent ; who have learned to like and watch animals, and know some arithmetic, geography, and English history ; and have shunned immoral books like *Tom Jones*, and not attended to the poets, who are too often mere abjects and placemen. Like all educators, Cobbett, in drawing out his programme, leaves us with a clear picture of himself. This programme is very far from that of the male and female pedagogues [1] of the preceding age.

With all his effrontery and iterations, his continual charging at the same red rags, Cobbett appeases us at last by his humanity and his good English. He is a man and not, what Lamb called Godwin, a ' professor ' ; there is none of the maddening frigid drip of doctrinaire talk in his pages. He is of the brown earth earthy, and his joyous shouting pilgrimage along its high roads is refreshing to watch. He has ridden through England, filled with blind wrath against ' fundlords,' but with an eye that feasts on the country, on the formation of clouds and the flight of starlings, when he looks up from his scrutiny of the crops and piggeries. The *Rural Rides* are full of this kind of charm, and of such glimpses of country manners as meet us in the older novelists. In Warminster market he revels in ' the very finest veal and lamb that I had ever seen in my life, and so exceedingly beautiful, that I could hardly believe my eyes.' He falls in with a gipsy girl, who could have told his fortune had he been thirty years younger ; or explains to a farmer the etymology of Beaulieu ; and all amid the bluster of a

thousand tirades. We hear a man speaking who has worked with his hands, and has hedged and hoed peas, and has sat in messrooms, and in prison, far from wife and children: one of whom, on hearing his father was in Newgate, 'to disguise his tears, and smother his sobs, fell to work with his hoe, and chopped about like a blind person'! He is a big farmer with a genius for transparent expression, which is the medium of his affections and hatreds and experiences.

He has also the sense of beauty, though little of what is called poetry, in his composition. The beautiful is one of his appetites, which are numerous and honest, and to satisfy it is not in his eyes a literary affair at all; but the result is literature.

> Standing on the hill at Knighton, you see the three ancient and lofty and beautiful spires rising up at Leicester; you see the river winding down through a broad bed of one of the most beautiful meadows that man ever set his eyes on; you see the bright verdure covering all the land, even to the tops of the hills, with here and there a little wood, as if made by God to give variety to the beauty of the scene, for the river brings the coal in abundance for fuel, and the earth gives the brick and the tile in abundance.

This is unaffected enough, it is central English of any period; but the thing could not, or would not have been, and was not, written a hundred years before; people did not enjoy these things, it seems, in these ways in George the First's time; and Cobbett, so often cited as an arch-Philistine, has therefore his share in the so-called Time-Spirit, and is a congener of Shelley and Carlyle, with a plain manner.

CHAPTER X

SCOTT'S VERSE: EARLIER MEDIEVALISM

I. Repute of Scott's verse; his temper towards books; his conception of romance, at successive periods.

II. Interest in German; *Lenore*. The ballad since Percy: Herd, Pinkerton, Ritson. *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Distribution of poems in the *Minstrelsy*. Scott's procedure (avowed, unavowed, and imputed) with his texts.

III. 'Imitations' and 'legendary poems' distinguished; Scott's varieties of style. His companions: Leyden; *Tales of Wonder*; George Ellis.

IV. The ballad between 1802 and 1832: Jamieson, R. H. Evans, Motherwell.

V. Transition of Scott from ballad to lay; metres used: romance stanzas, octosyllabics, *Christabel* measure.

VI. Lays: *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, *Lady of the Lake*, etc.

VII. Lyric and miscellaneous verse; different levels of style and excellence Underestimated greatness of Scott as a lyrist. His Elizabethan inspiration.

VIII. James Hogg, 'The Ettrick Shepherd': ballads, songs, *The Queen's Wake*: *Kilmeny*.

1

THERE is an inclination to think of Scott's poetry[1] as an outworn commodity, however suitable it may remain for the young. Does he not say that Byron beat him at his own game of telling adventures in verse? And where, it is asked, is Byron now? Who reads, for pleasure, *Mazeppa* or *The Bride of Abydos*? And in what limbo then, are *Rokeby* and *The Lord of the Isles*? Scott, with his modesty, with his cheerful admissions, seems to provoke such questions; he talks of his verse, and of its popularity, and of the decline of that popularity before the fame of Byron, much in the tone of a decent merchant, who has disposed of so many hogsheads of good wine or butter; but the brand is going out of use, and a rival house holds the market. Just, he says, as Mr. Wilkes explained 'to his late majesty' that he himself was never a Wilkite,

so I can, with honest truth, exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million.

And he is equally free from over-confidence as to the fate of his stories; he is nearer to Chaucer than to Shakespeare in his attitude to literary fame. He has none of the lonely assurance of the 'artist'; and he dwells in no 'tower of ivory,' but in a sociable, well-lit upper room, looking out upon the market-place, where the humours of men and women move before him as in a theatre. The Waverley Novels have never wanted for critics. Their light-heartedness, their freedom from missionary ferocity, caused Carlyle, shallowly, to judge them shallow; and their language has often been stigmatised as careless and transient. That Scott is greater than anything he wrote, is also easy to say, and the truth.

But then it is very high praise. Scott's own judgment, even of his poetry, is not a final one; and his prose, in its variety and inequality of craftsmanship, has seldom been sufficiently studied; it is a most accurate register of the fluctuations in his sympathy and insight, in his humour and descriptive skill. To note, both in his verse and his prose, where the colours are indeed faded, and where they remain fast and bright, is a delightful inquiry. Scott, moreover, is so great and good an entertainer, that we have to be on the alert for the moments when he is something more than that and rises into high, at times into consummate, literature.

But authorship, no doubt, is not the word for the temper of Sir Walter Scott; it better suits that of Southey, who lived in books and for their sake. In Scott life and books interpenetrate; their call to him is a harmonious one; and together they make for him a third thing, which may be described as experience. Ballads and tales of the border he learned when young, and often by ear, not from print. He rode, and kept lively company, and read human nature, including that of lawyers, in undress. He was crossed in love, saying little; he spun a wide and a tough web of friendship with persons of all ranks; he founded a family, and, full of the romance of the soil, planted himself upon it; he became a master of humours, chronicle, anecdote, legend, dialect, costume, law, and genealogy. He read enormously, not in order to be learned, but to lengthen backwards his vivid perception of the present; seemingly at random, but unconsciously in the service of his future craft; so that when the time came, his pen went with a mysterious ease and speed, and his memory, not verbally very exact, but of the strongest kind, gave him back for use all its appropriations. His notes show the stores of documents that he devoured, and of true tale or legend

that lie behind his inventions. He was certainly the most widely read and the most learned of all British romancers.

In his first period of authorship, lasting about ten years (1796-1805), Scott translated, edited, and imitated poetry, without writing much of his own that is good; in his second period (1805-14) he truly wrote poetry; while in the last (1814-32) he wrote chiefly prose, and a good deal of verse at intervals. The edition of Dryden, and some other prose, falls into the second of these stages. All the while, whichever medium he used, he was at his life's work of romancing.[1] Even in his reviews, lives, and histories; in his accounts of the British novelists, or of *Gulliver* and of Dryden's heroic plays, and in *Tales of a Grandfather*, he is back again with romance. The word is always in his mouth, and its meaning changes for him from one period to another. It was to acquire further meanings beyond and outside Scott's range; in Coleridge, in Keats, in Peacock, we find them; but he leads us close up to those meanings, and it is well to pause with Scott and clear our notions of the term. At first he understood by romance the spirit and form of Percy's *Reliques*, especially of the narrative popular ballad of the Border—*Chevy Chase* or *Kinmont Willie*—and also of its German and English followings. Next, it came to cover the mediæval lays or tales, in verse or prose, whether French or British, of which he has left his views in his *Essay on Romance*. Going to these lays and ballads as a pattern, and embodying several ancient elements, such as the feeling for chivalry or for the supernatural, Scott invented a lay of his own, which also brings in the stirring life of real but remote history, marching to the tune of pipe and drum, rather than the life of fairyland or the greenwood as accompanied by the professional twangling harp. Then, after 1814, he turned also to prose, wrote his novels, and so enlarged the conception of romance for good and all, without limit, and bequeathed this conception to Britain and to Europe, to Balzac and Hugo and Merimée. And here his labour was twofold. First, he brought in the material of which prose was the proper form; the life and humours of modern Scotland, and of the Border, and of England in part as well; with all the associated web of legend, chronicle, superstition, custom, law, and dialect. Next, in *Ivanhoe*, he swung back for a time to the Middle Ages, already otherwise presented by him in his verse, and he portrayed them in his prose tales. Thus was the scope of the historical novel completed. The story of Scott's art is the story of this

evolution of his idea of romance, under his hand, in its successive and accumulating stages. Accumulating; for what he had once won he never again let go. The Robin Hood ballad comes back again in *Ivanhoe*, and the gallant sentiment of *The Lord of the Isles* remains unweakened in one of the last of the novels, *Castle Dangerous*. The same code of honour, the ballad pattern of story, are found, too, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, curiously interveining the more courtly and romantic artifice and the comedy. Conversely, the illustrative lore of the *Minstrelsy* and of Scott's poems forecasts in a score of ways the subjects and temper of his novels. 'Have they forgotten the *prose* of the *Minstrelsy*?' was the question of one who listened to the eternal discussion as to the 'author of *Waverley*.' We shall return to the easy, shifting way in which he spoke of that romantic temper, which is common to all his works.

II

For twenty years Scott watched human life and manners without much idea of putting them on record. Experience sank too deep for immediate expression. He sought in books, and in the verse that he read or heard recited, for his topics and poetic form, and has told us the story of his beginnings. In 1795, when he was twenty-four, the refrain of Bürger's *Lenore*, as translated by William Taylor, rang in his ears and moved him to emulation. He printed next year his own version of that poem and of *Der Wilde Jäger*, without attracting notice. He plunged into German, a tongue only just beginning to be known; and relates how the lecture of Mackenzie in 1788 on German literature had given him his first impulse to the study. He read *Die Räuber*, and translated *Götz von Berlichingen* under the title of *Götz with the Iron Hand* (1799). But his heart was with the native ballad; and in 1802 came the first two volumes of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, the third following in the next year. This, the second great monument of British ballad-learning, appeared thirty-seven years after Percy's *Reliques*, which is the first. Professor Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98) is the third; and the fourth can only be raised by some scholar and man of letters who shall critically judge the whole material thus provided.

The value of the *Border Minstrelsy* can be seen after a glance at the fortunes of ballad study in Britain since Percy's day. These are sketched by Scott himself in his *Remarks on Popular*

Poetry, written long after, in 1830; an account in which he also brings the history up to the time of writing. His review is well supplemented by that in William Motherwell's introduction to *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* (1827); between them they represent the best opinion of the day upon ballad-learning. Percy's example had soon been infectious.

In 1769, four years after the first edition of the *Reliques*, had come David Herd's[1] *Antient and Modern Scotish Songs, Heroic Ballads*, etc.; the ballads included, as well as the songs, are of price, and this unostentatious and faithful garland, which reappeared much increased in 1776, is called by Scott, justly and briefly, 'the first classical collection of Scottish songs and ballads.' Herd does not doctor his texts, either for good or ill, and does not forge; thus contrasting with the impudent but learned antiquary, John Pinkerton,[2] whose *Scottish Tragic Ballads* (1781, enlarged in *Select Scotish Ballads*, 1783) include some barefaced concoctions. To these the author soon confessed, under the healthy and relentless criticism of Joseph Ritson, who must be called the founder of the scientific study of popular poetry in Britain.

Ritson's ferocity in dispute is that of a bygone time, and reminds us of Scioppius or Salmasius. In his treatment of Percy and Warton there is a touch of the insanity to which he finally succumbed. The former, he insinuated, had really no 'manuscript' at all behind his *Reliques*; but had this been so, the good bishop would have to be credited with the genius of a Chatterton. Ritson found inaccuracies in Warton, and treated him as a pure humbug. He was unsparing in his comment on Johnson and Steevens, as editors of Shakespeare. Some of his peculiarities were more amiable; he was a vegetarian, he used and defended an absurd spelling of his own (by no means 'phonetic'), and latterly he became a rabid Jacobin, and dated his letters by the calendar of the French Republic. But Scott's amused regard for Ritson was justified; and what is stranger, his liking was returned. Ritson unearthed and edited with great accuracy many invaluable things. He was the first to print some of those famous lyrics, written in the time of Edward I., which confirm the renewal of English song. His *Robin Hood* (1795) is a collection of good versions both of the better and inferior ballads on the subject. His 'Scottish' songs, his fairy tales, his *Bibliographica Poetica*, all have their worth. With Herd he is the first of the ever-increasing band of true investigators

of our ballad-lore. They bridge the years between Percy and Scott.

The *Minstrelsy*[1] contains about one hundred and one distinct poems or fragments, divided by the author into three classes. These are 'historical ballads,' 'romantic ballads,' and 'imitations of these compositions by modern authors.' The first kind

relates events, which we either know actually to have taken place, or which, at least, making due allowance for the exaggerations of poetical tradition, we may readily conceive to have had some foundation in history.

The romantic ballads include 'such legends as are current upon the Border, relating to fictitious or marvellous adventures.' The third class 'are founded upon such traditions, as we may suppose in the elder times would have employed the harps of the minstrels.' This is clear enough; but some further distinctions will be of use, and the contents of the *Minstrelsy* may be approximately redistributed as follows:—

1. There are sixty-two folk-ballads of the true kind. Many of these are 'historical,' including a number that Scott was the first to publish, such as *The Lochmaben Harper* and *Rose the Red and White Lily*. Others, which are 'romantic,' the world owes to him also, including *The Wife of Usher's Well* and *Clerk Saunders*. Ballads that are neither 'historical' nor yet supernatural, for instance *Lord Thomas and Fair Annie*, he does not group separately: they are not 'such as we may readily conceive to have had some foundation in history.' But these often belong to various familiar, widespread motives of the ballad-muse, out of place and time. 2. Of the remaining thirty-eight poems some are anomalous, like *The Twa Corbies* and *Fair Helen*, being lyrical in cast. There are also at least ten true old folk-lyrics or lyrical scraps, such as *The Lyke-wake Dirge* and *Lesly's March*; a small but costly garland. 3. The 'modern imitations' contain about twenty-seven lyrical or narrative poems. Amongst these are three palmed off on Scott by Surtees as ancient, a song and some five ballads of Scott's own, and five contributions by Leyden; the rest being to the credit of Robert Jamieson, Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Lewis, Morritt, Colin Mackenzie, Marriott, and Miss Seward.

But for Scott, some of the best popular poetry in Europe would almost certainly have been lost, for the reciters were often old and the versions only lingered in remote places. In his Preface he briefly explains the advantage he enjoyed from

the help of Herd, from the recitations of Mrs. Brown of Falkland (which reached him deviously through Lord Woodhouselee), from 'Glenriddell's manuscripts,' and from other sources. He also speaks of his procedure with his texts, which of late (1912) has been much canvassed:

> No liberties have been taken, either with the recited or the written copies of these ballads, farther than that, where they disagreed, which is by no means unusual, the editor, in justice to the author, has uniformly preserved what seemed to him the best, or most poetical, reading of the passage. . . . Some arrangement was also occasionally necessary, to recover the rhyme, which was often, by the ignorance of the reciters, transposed, or thrown into the middle of the line. With these freedoms, which were essentially necessary to remove obvious corruptions, and fit the ballads for the press, the editor presents them to the public, under the complete assurance that they carry with them the most indisputable marks of their authenticity.

Scott often states that he has compounded the text of a particular poem from two or more versions, or has taken one version as a basis and mended it from others. But he left no *apparatus criticus*, so that we can only tell just what he did when the MS. versions that were before him chance to have been saved. His language does not hide, though it hardly brings out, the fact, which the lay reader is slow to appreciate, that a poem in the *Minstrelsy* may often be something that no man had ever before heard, or read, or uttered, in the form in which it is printed. It is now known that Scott went much further in plastic treatment than he felt it needful to explain. He made almost as free with his material, at times, as Burns with the vernacular songs. If he thinks he can write better, in the ballad-spirit, than the texts before him, he alters; not, indeed, leaving much out, but filing and burnishing, changing and inserting words and phrases, and adding stanzas of his own. *The Gay Gosshawk*, for example, is made up in this way, and shows the freedom of his dealings, both of the kind that he avows and of the kind he does not. *The Lochmaben Harper*, *Katharine Janfarie*, and many more, are thus altered, though in a less degree; and illustrations would be endless. One significant one may be given. Scott found that one of his texts of *Sir Patrick Spens* mentioned Norway as the destination of the ship, and also that the 'Maid of Norway' was acknowledged heiress to the throne of Scotland in the year 1285. He persuaded himself that 'the cause of Sir Patrick Spens' voyage' may well have been to bring back this princess,

of whom his texts said nothing. He put her into the version he published, so completing one of the most beautiful stanzas in any ballad:

> To Noroway, to Noroway,
> To Noroway o'er the faem;
> The king's daughter of Noroway,
> 'Tis thou maun bring her hame.

In doing this, Scott no doubt felt, and truly, that he was carrying out the practice of ballad-makers; he joined the ranks of the unknown authors, and worked in their way, changing where he was moved to do so. He became for the moment one of these lawful but unregistered sons of the Muse. He did not wish to make a canonical text of a ballad, for there is no such thing. He did not wish to save all the traditional versions for the sake of literary scholarship or of folklore students. He wished to carry on Percy's work, both by fostering the love of popular poetry, and by producing the best version that his material and his poetic tact together enabled him to produce. A better poet than Percy, he had a better claim to manipulate.

What he cannot be shown to have done, and what the world, without damning proof, will never believe he did, was to foist upon it a ballad that he knew to be an imitation as old, genuine, and popular. Like all men who are found not to have made a full confession, he has imaginary sins laid to his charge. His good faith in his handling, for instance, of the ballad *Auld Maitland*,[1] has been questioned.

But we are convinced that the case has broken down. At times, indeed, he is easy-going in his judgment of the 'literary imitation'; chafing, for instance, at the rancour and punctilio with which Ritson prosecutes the faults of Percy. But his view is clear enough. Speaking of Frere's translation of the *Battle of Brunanburh* into fourteenth-century English, he observes that 'where the license is avowed, and practised without any intention to deceive, it cannot be objected to but by critical pedantry.' He was incapable of a huge practical joke like Prosper Merimée's *La Guzla*, which was given out as translated 'from the Illyrian.' There is a great gulf between this kind of act and the utmost of Scott's unacknowledged modifications of actual ballads. It is a pity he left no *apparatus*, for then no questions could have arisen. The 'imitations' in the *Minstrelsy* are put into a separate section and signed.

III

This third section comes as an anti-climax after the treasures of the first two. Here we are in the company not only of Scott himself and of Leyden, but of Lewis, and of Colin Mackenzie, and of Miss Seward. But if we read it along with the *Tales of Wonder*, we appreciate the atmosphere in which Scott was working. It is that of the poetic studio, in which a band of enthusiasts are trying to copy old designs, or to work in their spirit, and are gleefully deceiving themselves as to the likeness. Scott himself was not thus deceived, and points out an essential distinction:

> I may hint at the difference, not always attended to, betwixt legendary poems, and real imitations of the old ballad. The reader will find specimens of both in the modern part of this collection.

He cites his own *Glenfinlas* and *Eve of St. John* as 'legendary' poems; the 'third part' of *Thomas the Rhymer*, labelled 'modern,' is another example, and indeed most of the imitative section is of this kind:

> In numbers high, the witching tale
> The prophet pour'd along;
> No after bard might e'er avail
> Those numbers to prolong;

though Scott does prolong them; and in the second part of the same tale, 'altered from ancient prophecies,' he imitates the old style:

> There shall the lion lose the gylte,
> And the libbards bear it clean away;
> At Pinkin Cleuch there shall be spilt
> Much gentil bluid that day.

In his poetic diction Scott was often distracted from the pure sources by the mimicries of German or British enthusiasts. He did not always see the difference of styles, though most of his own touches in the text of the *Minstrelsy* are in perfect keeping. But he wrought, as if impartially, now in the true and now in the artificial manner. Sometimes, in his subsequent lays, he was to give a very echo to the old authentic strain:

> Bewcastle now must keep the hold,
> Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in hall,
> Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
> Must only shoot from battled wall:
> And Liddesdale may buckle spur.

This is as late as 1813, from *The Bridal of Triermain*, and it is quite different from the regular manner of the lays. Of that, at its worst, there are many anticipations in the *Cadyow Castle* of ten years earlier:

> Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
> Obsequious at their Regent's rein,
> And haggard Lindesay's iron eye,
> That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

Scott was thus the life and soul of a band; and his work as editor and poet is so bound up with that of his companions, that the names of two or three among them will be little interruption to this chapter. The most vivid figure and the greatest scholar of his circle was certainly John Leyden,[1] whose *Lord Soulis*, *The Cout of Keeldar*, *The Mermaid*, and other pieces, appeared in the *Minstrelsy*. Leyden, even when he tries to imitate the ballad, only produces the 'legendary' poem; hardly a single verse has the popular stamp; either the multiplied rhyme, or the extra dash of the picturesque, or the modern-lurid, or something else, interferes. But this is no censure upon Leyden's stories; in the best of them there is a devilry, a savage gallop, a touch of the *unheimlich*, which is hardly present in Scott's own. Leyden gets nearest to the ballad-tune in such a verse as this:

> Swift was the Cout o' Keeldar's course
> Along the lily lee;
> But home came never hound or horse,
> And never home came he.

But this is not characteristic. He may or may not have read *The Ancient Mariner*, but in *The Elfin Knight* (contributed to *Tales of Wonder*) he is for a moment of the same world, which is not ours:

> And light and fair are the fields of air
> Where he wanders to and fro;
> Still doom'd to fleet from the regions of heat
> To the realms of endless snow.

Leyden was himself what he wished to be, a Border ballad-hero. His wild generous courage, his oblivion of obstacles, distance, hardship; his grating oddity and loudness, his essential veracity and force, are well chronicled by Scott. He was full to the lips, like his friend, of the historic, legendary, and supernatural lore of his country, and had the scholar's memory and precision besides. A mighty linguist, and an Orientalist who aspired to rival Sir William Jones, he spent

eight years in the East, translating not only out of but into many tongues, leaving behind him a mass of erudite material, and dying at thirty-six. Leyden should himself be made the subject of a martial or adventurous lay. His poetic gift, outside of his ballads, was rather of the glossy classical order. But his versions are full of spirit, and like Campbell, he could attain a rushing rhythm which is better than his diction. It is heard in his lines (1803), too little known, on *The Battle of Assaye*:

> Ah, mark these British corses on the plain!
> Each vanish'd like a star
> 'Mid the dreadful ranks of war,
> While their foemen stood afar,
> And gaz'd with silent terror on the slain.

Of one volume, in which he himself had no share, but which connects itself with the 'imitations' in the *Minstrelsy*, Scott has left a genial and amused account. This is the *Tales of Wonder* (1801), edited by his friend Lewis, in which we seem to hear the death-rattle of the older mystery-mongering verse. The assault on the nerves was continued later and with more genius by Maturin in prose. Coleridge had already transplanted terror and marvel into the inner places of poetry, but Lewis went on piling horrors so much beyond the verge of the grotesque, that he saw the joke and produced writings of the Ingoldsby type as if in self-defence. This note is audible in the *Tales of Wonder*, and in the much derided but absurdly efficient *Alonzo and Imogene*. Lewis himself parodied this production; needlessly enough, when the original ran thus:

> His vizor was closed, and gigantic his height,
> His armour was sable to view;
> All pleasure and laughter were hush'd at his sight;
> The dogs, as they eyed him, drew back in affright;
> The lights in the chamber burned blue!

This is the spirit of *The Castle of Otranto*, facing out its own nonsense with a 'dry grin.' There is a blunt and vulgar but undoubted hold on rhythm; and we know from Scott that Lewis was 'a martinet for the accuracy of rhymes and numbers,' as some of his letters testify. Lewis's other verses, though worthless, are symptomatic. There are translations, after Gray, of Norse poems; couplets after Parnell; and lyrics from Goethe. *The Gay Gold Ring* is his best original piece, and is, indeed, no laughing matter. The dead maiden comes back to reclaim a ring that had belonged to another lover, and wins it from the possessor at the price of three nights'

stay; but each time her touch chills him to palsy. In the same volume are some of Scott's early ballads, and Southey's *Old Woman of Berkeley*. This and Southey's other bogle-pieces are the best things of the school, and the best that he did (see Ch. XIV.). Scott and most of his group often face the supernatural in a pleasant, antiquarian spirit, which meets us again in his poems and stories. They relish rather than dread the unseen; we seem to hear them crying 'Capital, capital!' over *Clerk Saunders* or *The Wife of Usher's Well*. This is not quite the mood of Coleridge or Maturin.

The kindly Lewis ministered to a passing taste for horrors; but another friend, cherished by Scott for his wit, conversation, and learning, left a deeper mark. George Ellis had begun with his free cheerful *contes*, the *Poetical Tales of Sir Gregory Gander*; joined the makers of the *Rolliad and Probationary Odes*; changed his views, accepted Pitt, whom he had attacked, and helped Canning and Frere with *The Anti-Jacobin*. He was first of all a satirist; but concurrently a mediævalist—no bad combination. In 1790 he produced *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, and in 1805 the more noteworthy *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, in which the English counterparts of the Breton lays, as well as Amis, and Guy, and Bevis, and many more were made known not only to scholars but to 'gentle readers.' The *Specimens* are a mixture of dissertation, quotation, and half-humorous summary. Ellis faces romance a little in the spirit of *Sir Thopas*, but his feeling for its beauty pierces through his gentlemanly sardonic style. The book helps to explain the impulse that encouraged Scott to pass from the ballad to the lay.

IV

Before describing this change, it is in place to notice the stimulus to ballad study that was given by the *Minstrelsy* during Scott's lifetime.[1] Alongside of him, but unaware of his labours, another inquirer, Robert Jamieson, the Morayshire antiquary, had also been reaping. Jamieson had not Scott's genius or luck, but was in method more scientific. In 1799 he

> set about collecting, in the exact state in which they are now recited in the country, such popular ballads and songs as were still deemed to merit preservation, but had escaped the researches of former compilers.

Jamieson, like Scott, came on the track of Mrs. Brown of Falkland, and found that she not only remembered the ballads she had heard in childhood, but sometimes compared, and perhaps insensibly combined, different versions of the same poem: a classic example of the way in which ballads are transmitted, and modified, and at last captured in writing. These and other treasures he put in order, scrupulously noting any piecework of his own. When he came to compare notes with Scott, they found that they had discovered some of the same things. But their friendship is a model for rival scholars. They co-operated, along with Henry Weber, in the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (1814). Jamieson had already opened up further a vast field, the comparative study of ballads, by the translations from the Danish in his *Popular Ballads and Songs* (1806). He saw the analogies between the Scottish and the Scandinavian poems, and revealed the precious *Kjæmpeviser*, or heroic ballads collected in the sixteenth century, to the British reader. He also wrote imitations of his own: one of them is in the *Minstrelsy*; they are over-studious and bristle with Scots.[1] The confessed imitations of the folk-ballad by James Hogg, chiefly to be found in his *Mountain Bard* (1807), are of much greater mark, and will be noticed presently.

The scientific temper of Ritson and Jamieson, and the opposite impulse of piecing, 'restoring,' and imitating—whether from good motives or bad—the popular poetry, grew side by side, and came into natural conflict. The orthodox view is well stated by R. H. Evans in 1810, in his revised edition of the *Old Ballads* originally issued by his father, Thomas Evans, the Strand bookseller, in 1777 and again in 1784. Evans the son was able to draw on the Roxburghe and Pepys collections, had a strict view of the sanctity of texts, and deprecated the practice of altering them silently:

> I contend that when such alterations are frequent, systematic, and unnoticed, the poetry of different ages is confounded; the reader is in a state of perpetual delusion.

This is an artistic as well as a scholarly objection, and tells against both Percy and Scott. Evans, however, was probably thinking of dishonest ballad-mongers. In 1810 appeared Allan Cunningham's fabrications, already mentioned, in the *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*; and, sixteen years later, his *Songs of Scotland*. These provoked the honest wrath of one of the most meritorious of all the explorers, William Motherwell, whose *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern* (1827),

contains not only several new ballads and versions, and thirty-three ballad-airs, but an excellent history of the progress of the study for a century past. There are many other publications, such as those of John Finlay (1808) and of George Kinloch (1827); but they cannot be detailed here, and it is plain that Scott had lived to see his work bear fruit. In 1830 he writes that during his own life 'the taste for the ancient ballad has more than once arisen and more than once subsided.' Many of the harvesters were themselves moved to melody; and the confessed imitations of Jamieson and Finlay contrast with the impudent inventions of Cunningham and Peter Buchan.[1]

V

We have Scott's word for it that he quitted the ballad-form, about 1804, largely for metrical reasons, and because the fashion was changing. He had not yet written one piece that was excellent. Now he passed from the ballad to the lay; that is the critical event in his life as a poet. For in doing this he not only invented a kind of minor species, or satellite, of the epic, but also found out his genius for lyric, which is much greater than his genius for either lay or ballad; he became the greatest of our lyric poets between Blake, or Burns, and Shelley: Coleridge, who wrote less that is lyrically perfect, not being excluded. But on this golden vein Scott hardly struck at once; and meanwhile can be traced, in any of his rhyming stories, the steps by which he passed from ballad to lay and came to build on the various tunes, mediæval and other, that long had haunted and sung in his brain. To the end he wavered between several styles and measures; and the narrative convention he finally produced, however noble and gallant, was not, like his lyrics, inimitable; for it left its mark on his disciples, and also on a finer species of romance than Scott could himself imagine.

The Lay of the Last Minstrel was meant to be a ballad for the *Minstrelsy*, but it grew too long for insertion. It was composed in the true spirit, in order to satisfy an old passion; 'for no other reason than to discharge my mind of the ideas which from infancy have rushed upon it.' But in writing it Scott found that he wanted a freer march and versification[2] than those of the ballad; something less cramping and more spacious than had served for *Cadyow Castle* and *The Eve of St. John*, and truly fitted for a 'romance of Border chivalry and enchantment.' The ballad was pent in too strait a

stanza; the reins were pulled too often to allow of an unchecked onset in the verse or a clear gallop against the shield of the distant enemy.

The ballad measure itself, which was once listened to as to an enchanting melody, had become hackneyed and sickening, from its being the accompaniment of every grinding hand-organ; and besides, a long work in quatrains, whether those of the common ballad, or such as are termed elegiac, has an effect upon the mind like that of the bed of Procrustes upon the human body; for as it must be both awkward and difficult to carry on a long sentence from one stanza to another, it follows that the meaning of each period must be comprehended within four lines, and equally so that it must be extended so as to fill that space.

What Scott sought was therefore not so much a better or a truer diction, as a measure, or measures, that would give scope for a rhymed long sentence and allow the concerted, rapid movement of heroic narrative. Thus in his form he was making partly for the epic; but in doing so he adopted in turn several distinct measures which had belonged historically less to pure epic than to adventurous romance. In recounting these, the whole remaining series of Scott's rhymed stories after 1804 may be considered together: *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*, *Rokeby* and *The Lord of the Isles*, with their appendices *Harold the Dauntless* and *The Bridal of Triermain*.

First, he drew on some of the stanzas that Chaucer had derided; and he gave a louder ring, and a rapider, to their faint simple chime than can ever be heard in *Sir Cleges* or *Sir Percevale*. The octosyllabic rhyme is once, twice, or thrice repeated *crescendo*, until the note is lowered, but not too much, and the stanza brought to for a moment, by the line of six, which breaks and falls with a never-failing spell. A new set of eights then begin, whose wave is likewise broken by a new line of six, rhyming with that of six which came before. Well delivered, this effect of alternate rush and fall would charm even in an unknown language. Scott's stanzas must be shouted on a moor to do them justice. It is well that they go so fast, or we should stop and think of the style, which is not always quite pure: but its faults are at least not due to that infantile element, which Scott's friend, Ellis, had marked down, not without affectionate satire, in the originals.

The rhythm is one that can be kept going a long while: it will do not only for rare effects, but for the tissue of the story. It suits crises and battles, and all kinds of preparation and

expectancy, and the catalogues of warriors and their birthplaces. It occurs, with many variations, in the *Lay*, and much oftener in *Marmion*. In *The Lord of the Isles* and *The Bridal of Triermain* it rises to a music of ampler soar and stoop, which foretells and influences that of Mr. Swinburne's consummate romance, *The Tale of Balen*.

> The lists with painted plumes were strown,
> Upon the wind at random thrown,
> But helm and breastplate bloodless shone,
> It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
> Should this encounter rue.
> And ever, as the combat grows,
> The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
> Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
> Heard while the gale of April blows
> The merry greenwood through.

More often, Scott went back to the simple rhymed octosyllables of a hundred romances, French and English, and managed to give them a cadence of his own despite the long intervening history of the metre. It prevails in *The Lady of the Lake* and *Rokeby*. The separate couplets are strongly marked, yet easily linked together, and they run quicker than with any other of our poets, unless we except Burns. The style associated by Scott with this measure, as indeed with the others, varies greatly. Under the spur of a warlike or heroic scene, the words run gallantly enough, and call to battle:

> Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
> And Randolph wipes his bloody brow.

This seems an easy way of writing, but no one had thought of it before. It was the strain that fired the ruminative Wordsworth for once to do the like, and to outdo it, in his *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*. Yet it is perhaps chiefly in this measure that we find masses of the strange conventional writing, in its way as artificial as Pope's, into which Scott so easily slipped, and which had, in its turn, to be put away by the romantic poets in their search for a pure style.

> But Isabel, who long had seen
> Her pallid cheek and pensive mien,
> And well herself the cause might know,
> Though innocent, of Edith's woe,
> Joy'd, generous, that revolving time
> Gave means to expiate the crime.

Scott can cover acres of paper with this kind of thing, in his desire for popularity and facility. He can also do perfectly

well without it; in the introductions to *Marmion*, and elsewhere, he often uses the same measure in a finer, quieter, and truer way; and his *causerie* in verse, ranging from the high to the familiar style, has the same kind of variable but assured charm as the prose of his letters and journals; nay, stands out against much of his other poetry as those natural, moving passages of prose do against the high-pitched scenes of literary dialogue in *Ivanhoe*. The famous lines on Pitt, or those on Dryden, which come in these interposed 'introductions' that are addressed to Stewart Rose or to James Skene, have a sort of Latin purity and sonority, and could serve, each of them, as an inscription; as the words written for one of Stevenson's lighthouses in 1814—*Pharos loquitur*—do so serve; and here is an impeccable example of Scott's diction:

> Far in the bosom of the deep,
> O'er these wild shelves my watch I keep;
> A ruddy gem of changeful light,
> Bound on the dusky brow of night,
> The seaman bids my lustre hail,
> And scorns to strike his timorous sail.

Of the monotonous fluency and wastefulness that beset the metre, when used for a long poem, Scott was from the first well aware; and the wish to escape them led him to the third of his metrical devices. He had heard *Christabel* recited,[1] about the year 1802, long before its publication; and it seemed that the freedoms of the measure, with its unlimited modulations of the four-beat line, were just what he wanted, to give variety to his couplets or stanzas. He owns his debt to Coleridge, whose spells he seems to have thought could be had for the asking. And even though his verse gains in glow and pace by the use of them, he is led—largely by the metre itself—to attempt all kinds of *diablerie* and subtlety for which his more downright and daylight genius but poorly fitted him. The echoes of *Christabel* in the beginning of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* show the difference when compared with the original. No doubt the omen-haunted castles of either poet would never have existed but for those foolish, melodramatic ones of Ann Radcliffe and her followers. But Coleridge moves within the unholy circle, and his fancy is at once the lord and servant of its own spell; whilst the fancy of Scott, ordinarily at work on healthy matters of this world, is merely forcing itself, at the appropriate hour of night, to feel the well-known influences of that hour, and to make us share the feeling in question. He does not go on long at such work, but seems to fly back with

relief to the spirit of raillery and common sense, and the revulsion can be remarked even in his prosody. The jigging impudent couplets that open *Harold the Dauntless* or *The Bridal of Triermain* are an anticipation of *Miss Kilmansegg* or *The Ingoldsby Legends*; they carry the homelier vein of *Christabel* a step farther; perhaps they owe something to the coarse but not ineffectual tunes of Lewis in his *Tales of Wonder*; in any case, such work constitutes a third instrument, or implement, of Scott's versecraft, to which he is apt to turn when he has in hand some grandiose piece of wizardry.

VI

In his rhymed romances these styles and measures are variably and studiously intermixed. These poems were not, like some of the Waverley Novels, struck off in a heat; 'verse,' says Scott, 'I write twice and sometimes three times over.' This carefulness does not make the verse better than the novels, for he was often more of an artist when he was taking less trouble, that is, when he was not writing against the grain or purely for the market. In general, the lays are much feebler as stories than the novels. Indeed, only two of them, *The Lady of the Lake* and *The Lord of the Isles*, are well told. In the others, the interest does not rest upon the story, but on the episodes and digressions, on incidental pageant and motion and colour. In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, says the author, 'the description of scenery and manners was more the object than a combined and regular narrative'; and *Marmion* is faulty in conduct, not only because it turns on the unchivalrous and 'commercial' crime of forgery, which Scott was sorry to have introduced, but because Marmion himself is a villain drawn from the stock of paste-board, puppet Satans, kept by the inflammatory novelists of the last age; the scowl, the fellness, and, worst of all, the glimpses of pity and virtue—nothing is spared us. The merit of the poem, as of *Rokeby*, lies in those elements which it shares with the historical novel, and much is to be forgiven for the canto on Flodden Field. Indeed, for actual fighting, for duels to the death, for downright taunting and 'flyting,' Scott's verse is a better vehicle than his prose, just as it is for rapid description of scenery. For dialogue and the exhibition of character his prose has a capacity of which his verse does not even give an inkling. *Rokeby* is another confused story, with another theatrical buccaneer, Bertram of Risingham; it would have been better

told in prose. But there is always some want of zest about Scott's pictures of the Civil War: in *Woodstock* the personages are lively enough, but the great public quarrel leaves us cold. The real beauty of *Rokeby* is in its landscapes, in its roll of musical Yorkshire names, and in its lyrics.

In *The Lady of the Lake*, which is on the old topic, common to ballad and romance alike, of the monarch wandering in disguise, the interest honestly depends on the story and on the traits of chivalry and delicacy that spring out of it. The visions of Allan Bane and the rites that precede the sending round of the Fiery Cross are kept well in their place, and do not encroach on the main subject, which is an idyllic thing of pure beauty and drawn straight from native tradition. Scott could scarcely have told the tale better in prose; it contains some of his rarest lyrics, including the *Coronach*. The style is usually direct and pure; and the disguised King James the Fifth must be forgiven for having for once called a tartan a 'bosom's chequered shroud.' Ellen Douglas, touched with the 'indignant spirit of the North,' is not unlike one of Wordsworth's maidens, but is not the worse for the absence of any official certificate that she has undergone the 'education of nature.' The secret of the king's identity is well kept from her, and also from the reader; it is let out in a *coup de théâtre* at the close. In the first draft of the poem, however, it was detected by a 'friend of powerful understanding,' unidentified, to whom Scott read the work aloud.

The Lord of the Isles, founded on the chronicles of the Bruce, came out in the same year as *Waverley*. Scott wrote it under the sense that the star of Byron was too strong for him, and also with his mind heavy over the loss of a good friend; the ending is hasty for so intricate a story. But one scene is worthy of the best sagas, in its pictures of a quarrel between four walls, and in the nicety of its chivalrous portraiture. Bruce enters the halls of his enemy, Lorn, in disguise, claiming shelter as a guest. When he discovers himself, bloodshed is threatened, and those present group themselves and speak. The tension, the swell and momentary ebb of passion, and the cross-currents of motive in the contending parties, are shown to perfection. The two chiefs with their adherents; the Lord of the Isles, Ronald, who is the betrothed of the daughter of Lorn, but who goes over to the guest; the English knight, Argentine, who is drawn with special liking, and the arbitrating churchman: all these are distinguished, more broadly and quickly of course as befits a lyric narrative, but with the same kind of skill and

historical instinct, as the personages who surround Queen Mary in *The Abbot*. The later meeting of Bruce and Ronald with the pirates, and the bloody little tussle in the 'dreary cabin,' rank with the best things of the kind in the literature of adventure, or in the Waverley Novels themselves, of which, in a certain sense, *The Lord of the Isles* may be called the earliest.

VII

Besides a sheaf of miscellaneous verse, occasional, conventional, or jocose, there remains the properly lyrical poetry of Scott; in keeping which to the last we have, in his own phrase, 'reserved, like the postboy, a trot for the avenue.' Many of these poems are inserted amidst the prose or verse of the narratives, and are thus, like the songs of the old playwrights, to be read in their setting rather than in any 'golden treasury.' The chanted scraps of Davie Gellatley or of Madge Wildfire are of this kind; they can stand and survive without the scenes where they occur, but those scenes cannot so well stand or survive without them: and the same is true of the lyrics of Edmund of Winston in *Rokeby*; *Brignal Banks*, and 'A weary lot is thine,' and *Allen-a-Dale*. Such lyrics are often in a different style from the surrounding narrative. Had Scott been an Elizabethan, and the evidence of his authorship obscure, treatises might have been written to show that the writer of these songs, on internal evidence, was an *interpolator* of genius; nay, that the same hand could not have written

> With desperate merriment he sung,
> The cavern to the chorus rung;
> Yet mingled with his reckless glee
> Remorse's bitter agony,

and also the song that ensues:

> O, Brignal Banks are wild and fair,
> And Greta woods are green;
> And you may gather garlands there
> Would grace a summer queen.

This uncertainty and inequality extends, no doubt, to the songs and lyrics themselves; and it is idle to complain that Scott seems unaware of the difference between his nobler and his cheaper music—between *County Guy* or the *Pibroch*, and things like *Ahriman* and *Zernebock*. Of such differences he is as little aware as Wordsworth; thinking, no doubt, equally

little of them all, as Wordsworth thought equally well, it might seem, of all *his* productions; but misled, where he was misled, in a different way. Where Scott plunges into a false kind of writing, it is the fault of literature, of his reading, of his resolve to be a romantic, an exotic, to the last drop of his blood, no matter at what outlay of sham eastern or sham northern sentiment. His mistakes and occasional dullnesses, like some of Chaucer's, are often due to his instinct for being representative—for giving utterance to every new feeling, and painting every sort of national life, of which he has read. If the material for understanding the East, or the Eddas, was still imperfect, that was not his fault; but it may be doubted if he had much sympathy for either in his temperament. What Zernebocks would we not throw to the lions for more of his jovial ditties like

> Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
> Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl!

Of these ditties *The Foray* (1830) is the latest and by no means the worst. Scott remains, we said, the chief of our lyrical poets, or of our singing poets, between Burns, or Blake, and Shelley. He has more song in him than Wordsworth, though he has none of the power requisite for creating a great ode or a high metaphysical lyric; and more than Coleridge, in the proper sense of the term song; for the supreme musical artistry and instinct of Coleridge are used more for lyric narrative than for sheer song, in which his successes though great are few. Scott would have been a great poet if he had left only his songs; he would have been a less alloyed poet had he written nothing else. The best of them excel all the rest of his verse, however good; their regular, average performance is above that of his other verse; as for the worst in either kind, that does not exist for us at all, so that the comparison may be spared. Many amongst them, of a less inscrutable perfection than the best, are like little lays within the long ones, carrying on their sentiment in the shape of a minstrel's interlude, either with a galloping, *abducting* kind of tune, like *Young Lochinvar*, or with all the forms of romance, like *Rosabelle*. Such pieces range from the lyric of narrative to that of situation, or of pure feeling. One large group is loud and cordial and joyous; either with chivalric gaiety, such as 'Waken, lords and ladies gay' and 'Anna Marie'; or with swinging daredevilry, like the dactyls of 'March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale'; or the voice is lowered in the wary

excitement of the deerhunt, as in the magical song in *The Lady of the Lake*:

It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

Well as Scott could draw out such scenes into a chapter of careful prose, he had in his lyric form a more precious and trustworthy vessel for their essential emotion and breathlessness. And in this special sort of power, the power of giving the true passion of external things—battle, sport, adventure,—it must be said that lyric since his day has been greatly wanting. Even in the verse of Peacock, which comes nearest in ring, there is always a touch of travesty, of counter-romance, as if the first fine ardour were waning. But, with all their delicate charm, these joyous pieces of Scott's can hardly rank in perfection of workmanship, or in power to move, with those that are elegiac or sorrowful. In the great *Pibroch*, founded on a Highland tune, there is the wail of the pipes amidst the swell of anger. Such verse as *The Maid of Neidpath*, which tells a true story, has the kind of melody, real enough but almost common property among the poets, which is commanded at will by Thomas Moore. But 'Where shall the lover rest?' and 'A weary lot is thine, fair maid,' the latter of a more popular, the former of a far more cunning rhythm—

There thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!
Eleu loro, etc., Never, O never!

—these are only overpassed by the two companion yet contrasted funeral songs, which are still greater miracles of avoidance, soaring as they do so far above that level of spirited, notable diction which Scott forged for his lays, but which is fatal, somehow, to the utterance of the best that is in him. *Proud Maisie* is acknowledged to remain as high above all praise or analysis, giving as it does in its sixteen lines the essence of all that needs to be said about the dying of a young girl, as the *Coronach* is beyond all parallel in its expression of the tribal soul laid bare in public sorrow over the passing

of the chieftain. Of the same etherealised diction there are signs in many other lyrics of lofty temper and pure execution, from *County Guy* to 'When the glede 's in the blue cloud,' and from *Brignal Banks* to 'Hail to the chief who in triumph advances.' And, when it comes, it is felt that the spirit of song is not forced by the will or conjured up by incantations, but descends on the poet, and he has only to keep still for fear of marring its message.

In some of the best of these pieces, such as are spoken by Gellatley or by Madge Wildfire, the starting-point is clearly traditional poetry, or the songs of the older dramatists, as the case may be; and this is usually a fortunate beginning for Scott, and sets him in the right key of diction. It may be thought that he is at his best when he builds upon such themes but also rises out of sight of them, just as Coleridge, in the *Ancient Mariner*, works on the popular ballad and transcends it. *Proud Maisie* is itself a poem with a like origin. Scott's procedure, in the sixty-third chapter of *Waverley*, with the old snatch 'They came upon us in the night,' which he pieces out with rhymes of his own in the *macabre* style:

> But follow, follow me,
> While glow-worms light the lea,
> I 'll show ye where the dead should be—
> Each in his shroud,
> While winds pipe loud,
> And the red moon peeps dim through the cloud,

—this procedure is analogous to that of Burns when he touched or added to Scottish melodies, or to his own in the *Border Minstrelsy*. In all this we see what is meant by 'romanticism,' in its connection with 'romance.' For romanticism takes romance, with all its themes and moods, and re-creates it, almost out of knowledge; making sometimes a sophisticated product, far inferior to the original; but often also a thing of equal but different value; as an elaborately beautiful woman may resemble some simpler ancestress, not less fair; may, after all, owe her rarest touch to that consciously inherited likeness, however it be overlaid and disguised.

Now and then Scott reproduces, knowingly and in pleasant exercise of power, the actual sound of his originals—most commonly, of the ballads which to the last rang in his brain.

> Merry it is in good greenwood,
> When the mavis and merle are singing,
> But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
> When all the bells were ringing.

There are six whole poems, like *Alice Brand*, which have the regular language and trappings of the folk-ballad, including its refrain; but these are in the nature of formal imitations, and the true virtue of such attempts is scarcely to be seen in Scott, or until the appearance of Rossetti. It is worth adding, however, that Scott's lyrical power lasted late, though after the failure of his fortunes it may have come more painfully. In 1818 his full vigour is heard in 'Donald Caird's come again'; and his only personal verses, *The Dreary Change*, are dated a year earlier. The poet did not die in him: for just as many a typical scene of the lays was taken over and transplanted in the firm earth of the novels, so through his prose are heard lyrical snatches to the last, like golden fragments of youth.

Whilst searching for a form, Scott momentarily tried the drama.[1] The subjects of *Halidon Hill*, *Auchindrane*, and the rest, resemble those of the lays and novels. But he could not find a style, and fell into the easy loose-girt one of Fletcher, the master of the silver age before it was tarnished, or into the slower, more positive one of Massinger. The one suits generous and adventurous topics, the other is more reflective. Sometimes his echoes have a curious fidelity. The same knack, which is not unlike that of Charles Lamb, is seen in the pleasant and innocently mischievous mottoes from 'Old Plays,' or from 'New Plays,' which head many chapters in the novels, and are interspersed amongst real quotations. That prose, however, is a better medium for Scott than dramatic verse, can be seen by comparing the dull stretches of *Auchindrane* with the lively explanatory note which gives the authority for the story. Scott set no store by his dramatic trifles, though his historical essay on the drama is full of his sense for situation and character.

VIII

James Hogg,[2] 'the Ettrick Shepherd' (1770-1835), may be introduced as a balladmonger in the wake of Scott, though he is equally a songsmith of the fellowship of Burns. His prose tales have been mentioned (Ch. VII.); but to approach him through his association with *Blackwood's Magazine*[3] and John Wilson would be misleading. Wilson, as 'Christopher North,' used Hogg to his face, with more than the licence that Landor allowed himself in the case of Southey, as the hero of imaginary conversations. The 'Shepherd' of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, with his bursts of coloured diction and his harangues on the

poetry of eatables, easily becomes tedious, and it is a relief to turn to the droll business-like style and to the peasant shrewdness, suspiciousness, and complacency of Hogg's own autobiography. It is want of breeding rather than of gratitude that defaces his volume on *The Private Life of Sir Walter Scott;* yet he was not unworthy of Scott's incessant and sagacious kindness. 'I was a sort of natural songster,' Hogg observes, 'without another advantage upon earth.' His self-training in letters was difficult and tardy. Hogg never even heard of Burns while he was alive, but in 1797 a 'half daft man' repeated to him *Tam o' Shanter* 'on the hill.' 'I resolved to be a poet, and to follow in the steps of Burns.' In 1800 appeared his first published song, an excellent one, *Donald M'Donald*. He was next 'dissatisfied' with the imitative ballads in the *Border Minstrelsy*, and set about making better ones; which he did, and printed the first-fruits in 1807 in the *Mountain Bard*, a work of which 'Mr. Scott had encouraged the publication.'

Hogg, as we have seen, was right in being 'dissatisfied.' He has a wonderful ease of mimicry, catches the true ring of the folk-ballad oftener than Leyden or Surtees, and does not so often swerve into mere literature. But he is only too faithful; he is perversely ready to mint the baser coinage of broadsheet diction, and the result is hideous:

> Her browe nae blink of scorninge wore,
> Her teeth were ivorie,
> Her lips the little purple floure
> That blumes on Bailley-lee.

Hogg falls into this style a score of times; but then he retrieves it a hundred times; and this he does even in the ballad thus defaced, *Gilmanscleuch*; and also in *Sir David Graeme*, and *Lord Derwent* and *The Liddel Bower*. The last is a good example of Hogg's manner of treating 'certain traditionary stories,' which he 'chants to certain old tunes.' There are plenty of ballad *clichés* or formulæ, but they are not used coldly. Douglas begins, addressing the wife of his kinsman Liddel:

> 'O will ye walk the wood, lady?
> Or will ye walk the lea?
> Or will ye gae to the Liddel Bower,
> An' rest awhile wi' me?'
>
> 'The deer lies in the wood, Douglas,
> The wind blaws on the lea;
> An' when I gae to Liddel Bower,
> It shall not be wi' thee.'

Douglas cajoles menacingly, and reminds her how he had 'kissed her young and rosy lips.' She retorts that she has rued the day, and that Douglas had then thought only on her land. She bids him listen to the wee bird, which sings wae for the comely knight Liddel, whose 'blood is on a kinsman's spear.' The murderer forces the lady to fly with him: her kinsmen (Caerlaverock yeomen) now scour the land for her in vain; and 'lang, lang may her mother greet' (as the ladies did for Sir Patrick Spens), for

> The deed was done at Liddel Bower
> About the break of day.

There is some of the economy of stroke here that marks the authentic ballads, and the language is little alloyed.

In 1810 Hogg published *The Forest Minstrel*—'of which about two-thirds of the songs were my own'—the first instalment, and the largest, of his purely lyrical writings. Another notable group are found in his contributions—issued at first as of popular origin, but afterwards acknowledged as his own—to *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (1819-21). In lyric he did his soundest and most various, if not his loftiest, work. Many of his songs may be forgotten; they are hack-writing and slipshod, especially when he abandons Scots and seeks to be glossy. But he has left a score of songs that are almost beyond reproach in their several orders. Galloping dactylic measures, the passion of foray, and the insolence of vengeance triumphant, inspire him happily; and the rushing, truly magnificent ditty, 'Lock the door, Lariston, lion of Liddisdale,' seems to have escaped the eye of many anthologists, who have faithfully presented the ill-written and amateurish *Skylark*. The cadence of 'Rise! rise! Lowland and Highland men' is almost as stirring, and so is that of *McKimman*, and of 'Cam ye by Athol, lad wi' the philabeg,' and of *Donald M'Gillavry*. Of another sort, that of the mocking, wheezing whisky-song, *John of Brackadale* and *The Laird o' Lamington* are capital examples; and no 'kailyard' story gives the cheery gross atmosphere of Scottish country life better than *The Village of Balmaquhapple*—a kind of satiric picture without any exact precedent even in Burns. Nearer to the strain of Burns are the short-lined lyrics, 'When Maggy gangs away,' and *Meg o' Marley*. Among the Jacobite poems, *The Highlander's Farewell* is conspicuous, and also 'Up an' rin awa', Geordie.' These are but instances; and Hogg (though his note is here less certain) can also be pathetic in high English now and then, as he is in 'The moon

was a-waning'; and also in Scots, where he can be better trusted, as in *An Aged Widow's Lament*. But his rarest workmanship, in which he seems to become another man, is not found in his briefer lyrics.

In 1813, the year of *Rokeby*, the *Queen's Wake* brought at once to Hogg the poetic fame of which it still secures to him a remnant. Scott, as we know, was beginning to feel the counter-vogue of Byron, and had suffered already from the imitators of his lays. The *Queen's Wake* he assuredly reckoned amongst 'the more favourable imitations, produced by persons of talent,' although it does not reveal a rival who 'could overshoot him with his own bow.' The plan is pleasantly simple: Mary of Scotland keeps her 'wake' for three nights at Holyrood, and hears seventeen bards, beginning with Rizzio, chant their songs and tales in emulation. She favours Rizzio, but the hearers, rightly enough, do not prefer his song, and, wrongly enough, acclaim for the first prize a Highlander named Gardyn. Their award has long been overridden, and the thirteenth of the bards, 'Drummond from the moors of Ern,' the singer of *Kilmeny*, is admitted to be the best; but the eighth, a Fife man without a name, must surely be accounted next, or even equal, on the strength of the superb comic-horrible ballad called *The Witch of Fife*. In these two poems and some others Hogg uses archaic Scots, and such a style takes him almost clean away from his more modern and ineffectual one. This latter is a variation of Scott's own, but it serves mostly to bring out Hogg's want of poetic sureness and training. Some of the martial parts, indeed, like those in the sixteenth piece, *Dumlanrig*, are like Scott and worthy of him. But Hogg's compensations are found in a certain ballad rage, a wildness that comes and goes, a sudden rareness forcing its way through the stock diction. There is plenty of pace in *Earl Walter*, a fighting poem of the conventional Border-chivalric sort. In *The Witch of Fife* there is also comic drama, strange colour, and an overflow of Scotch-Bacchic devil-may-care humour. The old goodman who rebukes his witch-wife for her cantrips, but is converted by the hope of riding through the air to drink the bishop's wine that is locked in Carlisle tower, and who is left behind at daybreak to be wakened by five rough Englishmen and just escapes the flames, is a true creature of the native muse.

Kilmeny is built up on a ballad-theme of the regular kind—the sojourn of a mortal for a space of years in a kind of paradise among the fairies, and her return to earth. But the old pagan

underworld, flowery and shadowy, becomes a heavenly land, and an Elysium of virgin spirits. Moreover, such travellers in popular ballad, if they come back to the world, usually remain there; but Kilmeny cannot bear the grossness of earth, and vanishes again to 'the land of thochte.' Another difference from popular poetry is in the measure, which is founded on that of *Christabel*, being indeed technically the same, but opposite in its effect; for *Christabel* in general goes slow and is weighted with solemnity, but *Kilmeny* goes fast and trippingly, and the tune is both joyous and ethereal, and is not easy to match in our romantic verse. There is, moreover, a mediæval touch in the praise of pure maidenhood, or 'femenitye,' which belongs more to a romance than a ballad; and this praise is wonderfully unforced and natural, and not, as is usual in modern verse, a literary sentiment. The medley is a harmonious one, and the peasant fancy of Scotland is here seen in its finer flower. Nor can the pseudo-antique look and cast of *Kilmeny* make it less lovely, or mar its title to be called Hogg's most perfect composition.

His other verse, which is voluminous, shows a decided scattering and dilution of his gift, and suffers from his incontinence and ease in writing. Yet we are never sure that he will be unpoetical. His lays in the fashion of Scott, of which *Queen Hynde* is the longest and most laboured, are, indeed, not easily perused; but his *Poetic Mirror*, a batch of parodies, or rather imitations, of contemporary poets (including himself), contains curious echoes of Wordsworth's more abstract blank verse; and in *The Pilgrims of the Sun*, a fantasy relating the journey of an angel-guided mortal maiden through the heaven, the airy music of *Kilmeny* is sometimes heard. *Mador of the Moor* and other ventures may not here be even enumerated; but no one gains more than James Hogg by a discreetly chosen 'golden treasury.'[1]

CHAPTER XI

SCOTT: THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

I. Further stages of Scott's idea of romance: in *Waverley*, and *The Heart of Midlothian*.

II. Periods (1814-20, 1821-6, 1826-31) of the novels, and grouping. Sketch of each period: vindication of the latest novels.

III. Some general traits: use of the supernatural and depiction of villainy; motives drawn from law; attitude to theological matters; portraiture of Highlanders.

IV. The historical novel: Miss Lee; Miss Porter. Contrast with the history play. Treatment of eighteenth century, and of the Middle Ages; *Ivanhoe*. The seventeenth and sixteenth centuries; portraits of kings and queens.

V. Scott's attitude to his public, its drawbacks and value. Character of his endings; interest of 'extrication'; poetic justice, romance, and the 'scheme' of averages. Exceptional endings; *Bride of Lammermoor*; *St. Ronan's Well*; *Kenilworth*. Early heroes, defended.

VI. Vast population of the novels; comparison with Balzac, and with later English novelists. Facility and 'popularity'; J. L. Adolphus quoted. False charge of 'superficiality.'

VII. The styles of Scott. Adolphus quoted again. Varieties of manner. Talk of his monarchs. Real and unreal style, exemplified. Resource in technical ingredients (costume, etc.). Unequal success in passionate dialogue; causes. Lyric oratory in prose; studious technique and harmonies. Literary diction in Scots; Madge Wildfire. The style in the passages of higher feeling; its felicity. Language of the *Journal*.

VIII. Other prose works. *Tales of a Grandfather*; *Life of Dryden*, and *Life of Swift*. Critical reviews. Scott on his own craft.

I

The terms romance[1] and romantic come at last to be used by Scott in several new senses, some of which are satirical. In his *Essay on Romance* (1823) the aim is that of the historian and enthusiast; it is not written in the spirit of first love, but there is little sense of disenchantment. He reviews the state of learning on the topic, and notes the labours of Percy, Warton, Ritson, Weber, and George Ellis, distinguishing the mediæval lays, to which he was deep in debt, from the prose fictions into which they had been merged, and these again from the later schools of fiction, French and English, which carried

over the shadow of chivalrous sentiment into an unreal world. He stops short of describing the modern novel in England, as founded by Defoe. The early fervour of the public had been long disconcerted. The Radcliffian romance, the exploiting of the supernatural, had lost credit, and the *Tales of Wonder* had been laughed out of court. What romance had come to mean to Scott is well seen in *Waverley* itself. It meant first of all that 'picturesque' quality of natural scenes which permitted of a waterfall or even a reservoir being called romantic—the rhetoric, so to say, of landscape, as exhibited in Salvator Rosa and the emphatic school of painting. Mountains, torchlight, savage figures, Highlanders. The scene, too, is solitary and foreign: no one has visited it before. In *Waverley* the shade of Poussin is invoked. Flora MacIvor is found

> gazing on the waterfall. Two paces further stood Cathleen, holding a small Scottish harp. . . . The sun, now stooping to the west . . . seemed to add more than human brilliancy to the full expressive darkness of Flora's eye.

Flora herself is 'like a fair enchantress of Boiardo or Ariosto.' But Scott, as was noted by Coleridge, who found himself an 'exact and harmonious opposite' in this regard, cared for natural things less in themselves than through their human and historical associations. The breaking up of the Highland camp, which is told breathlessly, in the very spirit of *Marmion*, is 'a romantic effect.' One other passage must be given in full, for it unites every element in Scott's notion of romance —scenery, foreignness, literary memories of ballad or lay, the sense of danger and wonder and solitude, and, last of all, the humorous return of Scott upon his hero, or upon himself, as he comes out of his bath of romance and shakes himself, and recommences realist and Lowlander.

> The cool, and yet mild air of the summer night, refreshed Waverley after his rapid and toilsome walk; and the perfume which it wafted from the birch trees, bathed in the evening dew, was exquisitely fragrant.
>
> He had now time to give himself up to the full romance of his situation. Here he sate on the banks of an unknown lake, under the guidance of a wild native, whose language was unknown to him, on a visit to the den of some renowned outlaw, a second Robin Hood, perhaps, or Adam o' Gordon, and that at deep midnight, through scenes of difficulty and toil, separated from his attendant, left by his guide:—What a variety of incidents for the exercise of a romantic imagination, and all enhanced by the solemn feeling of uncertainty, at least, if not of danger! The only circumstance

which assorted ill with the rest, was the cause of his journey—the Baron's milk cows! this degrading incident he kept in the background.

It is sometimes forgotten how well Scott kept his head as a romancer; too well, it may be, always to produce perfect conviction. Miss Austen's mockery of the marvels and secrets of Northanger Abbey, or a book like Barrett's *Heroine*, brings us at once outside the enchanted land, into that of frank *counter-romance*; all sympathy has been lost. In the stories of Peacock, like *Maid Marian*, there is the friendliest parody and banter, but also not a little of the original charm and attraction of romance; not indeed its mystery, its breathlessness; but its chivalry, its heartiness are there. And we are not to forget that this gentle derision, this vein of realism and jolly satire, are also mediæval things, as we see in *The Fox and the Wolf* and in Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*; and that such correctives were quite well known to the English and Scottish workers in the shop of Romanticism. Scott, as we have seen, in the person of Edward Waverley betrays his share of this tendency to return upon, but not therefore to repudiate, romance. His double attitude is still better seen in his comment upon Jeanie Deans, who, so wrote one of Scott's surest critics, Lady Louisa Stuart,[1] after reading *The Heart of Midlothian*—'without youth, beauty, genius, warm passions, or any other novel perfection, is here our object from beginning to end.' Of Jeanie, Scott says at once that she is 'no heroine of romance.' But soon, in describing her 'venturous resolution to journey to London,' he says that there is indeed 'something of romance' in that; and so he uses the term in its noblest traditionary sense, to denote the quest of a high but seemingly forlorn purpose, through all kinds of dangers and devilries, for the sake of love or piety. The actual heroine of the tale, Helen Walker, may have made her pilgrimage along the same roads. So the term 'romance' gathers meaning; and we may think of the recital of Jeanie's expedition on the one side, and of a poem like *La Belle Dame sans Merci* on the other, as the twin and equal, the lofty, the confronted summits of 'romance.'

II

Like the plays of Shakespeare and the *Comédie Humaine*, the Waverley Novels were written very fast. But they have caught and held the world, and there is stuff in the weakest, and many of them are works of art. The liveliest way of

watching their evolution from point to point, seen in the light of the whole performance, is to read first the author's overtures and advertisements to each one as it came, and next the prefaces that he added when all was finished. These comments are integral parts of the novels, just as much as the masked narrative introductions by Cleishbotham or Clutterbuck. If we stand a little way off from this big, irregular, motley, yet never wholly incongruous pleasure-house, which was eighteen years in the building, we see how the designer, in his passion for variety and commodity, continually struck on new design and ornament, carried it far, then feared it would be tiresome and went back to the old, but soon returned once more to the new that he had quitted; how he lagged, revived, digressed; and how to the last, if sometimes tired of writing, he leaves no sense that his patterns were exhausted, any more than the author of the *Canterbury Tales*.

In the Waverley Novels there are thirty-one complete stories, only four of which, the first set of the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, are quite short. They fall into three groups, unequal in volume, but each covering about six years. The first group contains nine stories, in which the historical novel of genius is founded. The second opens in 1820 with *Ivanhoe*, which extends the historical novel to the Middle Ages; in this group there are thirteen stories. The third opens in 1825 with the fall of Scott's fortunes, and contains five novels and four brief tales. The stress was greatest in this last phase, but the pace was hotter in the second one, with its thirteen publications; in 1823, for example, appeared two masterpieces in opposite styles, *Quentin Durward* and *St. Ronan's Well*, with the long *Peveril of the Peak* thrown in. The first group, however, contains more successes, and is more leisurely in the execution; and contains no failure, unless it be *The Black Dwarf*. The familiar spirit who got all this done while Scott was talking, or attending in court, or editing, has kept the secret of his processes.

All the first nine stories are laid in Scotland, though in the travels of Captain Waverley and Jeanie Deans there is plenty of that clash and contrast of the two races (seldom at the expense of the northerner) which was a favourite and brilliant resource of the artist. In six the period is the eighteenth century, of which Scott's memory and fancy were fullest, and in three the seventeenth. In four cases, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and *The Black Dwarf*, the note of history is absent or distant; in two, *Rob*

Roy and *The Heart of Midlothian*, it comes much nearer; while only in *Waverley*, *Old Mortality*, and *A Legend of Montrose*, does the private interest of the story march along with public and momentous events.

In the 'General Preface' can be studied the prenatal vicissitudes of *Waverley*, Scott's own opinion of its merits, and his account of his early essays in prose romance. The plan permitted of a variety hitherto unknown in fiction; real history, and Scottish humour, and scenery, and lyrical interlude, and folklore, all are there, commingled if imperfectly blended. The gold is not well sifted, but the shaft is sunk and the ore found. As if he doubted his achievement, Scott's next three tales are without any historical setting, though built in part from actual lore or memories. Their real brilliance is in the painting of the nether vernacular life of the Lowlands. In *Guy Mannering* appear Scott's first great creations of character, Dominie Sampson and Dandie Dinmont; and astrology and prophecy intrude. The swindle of alchemy is satirised in *The Antiquary*, which might have come from the hand of a softer, more humorous Ben Jonson; but Edie Ochiltree is more like some personage of Shakespeare's. The Black Dwarf is a misanthrope of literary parentage, not the less unreal because drawn from a real model; and in this tale there is plenty of the conventional romance which Scott helped to extinguish. *Rob Roy* followed, where history reappears amidst the throng of humours, and Diana Vernon rides through them, and in Fairservice and Jarvie the feat is achieved of near contrast and perfect keeping. Then, regathering his powers, he produced *Old Mortality*, the swiftest, the most varied, the least alloyed, the most fully alive of all his novels.

Scott's second masterpiece, the greatest of all his writings, is *The Heart of Midlothian*. The consummation of his epical gift is shown in the account of the Porteous riots, and of his portraying gift in Jeanie Deans. *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *A Legend of Montrose* conclude this period. Ravenswood and Dalgetty are Tragedy and Comedy incarnate, like companion figures flanking a proscenium. In the second of these novels, Scott goes back to the theme of clan warfare and to his keen but sometimes overcharged drawings of Highland character. Two of these latter works fall into the three series of *Tales of my Landlord*, each with its prefatory setting.

His more headlong rate in the second period made for inequality. The preface to *Ivanhoe* explains his anxiety to

innovate, and his fear, not that his Scottish vein was exhausted, but that the public might be tired of it. He returned to the Middle Ages, which he had deserted since quitting poetry, and he also laid his scene, for the first time, in England; the double change introducing a new, faintly archaic style into the dialogue. Scott's powers were refreshed by the venture; and though *Ivanhoe* is not all equally real, nor its romantic diction always right, some of the life-blood of *The Knight's Tale*, and of the best Robin Hood ballads, and of the legend of Cœur-de-Lion, is transfused into it, and it keeps its gloss and vigour. It created a new variety of historical fiction. Scott next essayed the sixteenth century. *The Monastery*, overweighted by a too substantial wraith, was redeemed by its sequel, *The Abbot*, which contains his most skilful scenes of courtly tragi-comedy. *The Pirate*, though it introduces fresh scenery and is a reversion to the eighteenth century, is a less happy interlude between *Kenilworth* and *The Fortunes of Nigel*, where the scene shifts to England, and, in the latter story, to the play of Scottish humours in England. *Ivanhoe* and *The Fortunes of Nigel* stand out amongst all these for a colour, dash, and pageantry which Scott hardly attained before or afterwards. The whole series is also distinguished by its portrait-gallery of queens and princes. In the first period, there had only been the Pretender: in the second come Cœur-de-Lion, Mary of Scotland, Elizabeth, and James I.: to whom is added, in *Quentin Durward*, the figure of Louis XI., a blunt powerful picture of the traditional character. *St. Ronan's Well* is a digression, of the luckiest kind, into nineteenth-century manners, and shows Scott's strong head in the conduct of its tragical intrigue. In *Redgauntlet* he takes farewell of his darling subject, the Jacobite rebellion: it contains the most poetic of all his endings; and Nanty Ewart and *Wandering Willie's Tale* make weight against the Byronic Redgauntlet; while the heavy old epistolary form, which Scott uses so rarely, has its leisurely charm. *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*, which are 'Tales of the Crusaders,' have, like *Ivanhoe*, the ground-tone of romantic ballad, and the sort of nobleness, and yet of externality, that Scott had displayed in his poems. While he was at work on *Woodstock*, his story of the Civil War, his catastrophe came. During the whole of this second phase, he had daringly explored new provinces and annexed them to the art of fiction.

In his third period (1826-31), he wrote at his best and at his worst. Some of the short stories, *The Highland Widow*

and *The Two Drovers*, portray the Highland character with a new intimacy and power; and so does their successor, *The Fair Maid of Perth*. *Anne of Geierstein*, *Count Robert of Paris*, and *Castle Dangerous*, all mediæval, end the list, except for the sketch called *The Surgeon's Daughter*. No general veil of indulgence need be drawn over these, the last of the Waverley Novels. Scott does not ask us to pity Sir John de Walton or Harry of the Wynd when they fight on against odds, dealing some dazed mechanical strokes, but after all remembering ancient skill, or contriving new, in the heat of the final battle. Nor need we pity Scott. With the natural haughtiness that now served him well, he drove onward, and more wonderful than the courage that all admire is the handiwork that many overlook. The acknowledged failure of *Count Robert of Paris* may be due not more to fatigue and sickness than to its manner, under the passing influence of Gibbon, being more strictly historical than dramatic. Even here the life comes back when the prisoner batters the tiger in his cell, and the Crusaders' ships face the Greek fire before all Constantinople. That Scott had not allowed the body long to dull the mind, but had only chosen a bad method or background in *Count Robert*, is clear from *Castle Dangerous*, written under the same evil conditions, finished at the same time, and followed by his farewell to the public. It is thus the last of the novels; and the author's visit (19th July 1831) to the Douglas country and St. Bride's church, the scene of his not least spirited affray, is told with sensitive and tender skill by Lockhart. *Castle Dangerous*, despite its marks of fatigue, is one of the best examples of his more level style, without too much historical digression, with only the smallest shadow thrown from the wing of his evil angel—rhetorical dialogue—and with that happy interchange of natural talk and adventurous action which is his secret. The tale does indeed suffer from some schism in the interest; for the long though delicate tracing of the estrangement between the friends De Walton and De Valence gives little help to the central episode involving Bertram the minstrel and the disguised Lady of Berkely. But this and all the other arguments and parleys by the way, with their leisurely and chivalrous casuistry, converge on the wild duello in the ruins of St. Bride's. The style is for the most part plain and stripped, and, if somewhat wanting in the old careless wealth of energy, is distinctly that of maturity and not of decline.

III

Scott had, as it were, bound himself not only to take over every motive of old story and ballad and quicken it afresh, but to represent the whole nature and temper of his countrymen. He was thus doubly led to introduce the supernatural, which figures both in his poems and his novels, and the due handling of which he more than once considers. It was an element in the school of fiction that he supplanted; and in his reviews of Maturin and Hoffmann we have his mind upon the subject. The rock on which the tales of Mrs. Radcliffe had foundered, the droll explaining away and rationalising the source of terror, he treats with due contempt, and it is unworthy an artist's notice. Nor has he any use for such mere Arabian Nights as make the marvellous their main concern, with no background of natural reality at all. Soundly he says that the pleasure felt in mere marvel should be 'secondary to that which we extract from observing how mortals like ourselves would be affected' thereby: and in describing *Frankenstein* he acutely adds that

> the author opens a sort of account-current with the reader; drawing upon him, in the first place, for credit to that degree of the marvellous which he proposes to employ; and becoming virtually bound, in consequence of this indulgence, that his personages shall conduct themselves, in the extraordinary circumstances in which they are placed, according to the rules of probability, and the nature of the human heart.

In his reluctantly admiring notice of Maturin, whose fortunes he tried to promote, Scott analyses one of the chief effects that are produced upon 'mortals like ourselves' by the sense of unearthly presences: and this is (in Maturin's phrase) 'the fear arising from objects of invisible terror'; and he says with his usual tact, that 'the sensation is usually as transient as it is powerful.'

> The finest and deepest feelings are those which are most easily exhausted. The chord which vibrates and sounds at a touch, remains in silent tension under continued pressure.

But he could not refrain from touching the chord himself. Romance and Scotland—what would they be without the supernatural? Scott must have played on his chosen instrument with one string muted, had he shirked the challenge. As his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* show, his memory

was packed with delightful tales of bogles, omens, and appearances. Genius apart, he had his full share of those feelings of the night without which our nature is incomplete and indeed hardly healthy. He felt, like Shakespeare, the thrill of the supernatural along the nerves of his audience; but he could not, like him, find the words of the spell. 'Which of you hath done this?' There is more in those six words of Macbeth than in the whole business of the Bodach Glas, which is infected by the unreality of Fergus McIvor's language as he mounts the high romantic horse. Scott, in the same *Letters*, concludes that 'tales of ghosts and demonology are out of date at forty years and upwards,' and only 'overcome us like a summer cloud' in 'the morning of life.' The effects are evident. We need not speak of that curious Protestant Ariel, the White Lady of Avenel, so careful for the use of scriptures in the mother tongue; for, as her creator observed, she 'was far from being popular.' He could not work himself into the right heat of imagination over her, and fell back with relief upon the speech of Christie of the Clinthill. In general, except in *Wandering Willie's Tale*, where he succeeds consummately, his hold on the springs of fear is faint, and he loses his genius with the passing of daylight. In the same way, when he has to draw villains, he works hard, but has too little of 'the black drop in his heart' to succeed. He hardly has the imaginative reticence which makes us feel not only that Iago is real, but that what Iago does not say is worse than his worst words. Scott does best in this vein when he has a historical figure like Louis XI. to work on. When he can draw on his experience as a lawyer and man of the world, he is entirely at home, but chiefly in villainy that runs to roguery; and his zest for various types of rogue, Dirk Hatteraick or Dousterswivel, is unfailing. A few other odd strands may now be picked out of the bright, loose, motley texture of the novels.

One of the toughest of these is woven into his own calling of the law. Shakespeare, somewhat injuriously, admitted metaphors from dates and leases and indentures into his private sonnets and the last words of Romeo. But Scott, like Balzac, and like Shakespeare also, uses the realities of the law, and that doubly to his profit. His writers, advocates, and judges have living tones and faces, and can hide nothing from him. From Pleydell to Meiklewham, and from Saddletree to the judge in *The Two Drovers*, each of them speaks in the accent that is natural, not only to himself, but to the particular stratum

of the profession that he inhabits. Nowhere is the keeping so perfect; nowhere does the words flow with such tireless ease. But Scott also uses the hard legal facts of marriage, inheritance, and crime for the warp of his stories. *The Heart of Midlothian* and *St. Ronan's Well* turn on technical points, and some of their best scenes succeed in dialogue, plot, and characterisation, owing to the author's grasp of practical affairs. The trial of Effie Deans is a less skilful piece of writing than the conference between Francis Tyrrel and Captain Jekyl, where these two gentlemen have to bargain over a delicate, intricate matter of property and legitimacy. In such a situation the pride and passions of men must face at every point the solid edges of a legal obstacle. Balzac made even more than this of the law. It is often his real topic as a social philosopher; *César Birotteau* is the story of a bankruptcy, and the laws that concern money bulk large in the society of the *Comédie Humaine*. Avarice is there, expert in the code, and in dead earnest; and instead of the flying lights and humours of the Waverley Novels, there is a slow, savage irony. Money surcharged the imagination of Balzac; Scott stands above it, in the cavalier spirit, though it comes fully into his drama.

Theology and law are blood relations in North Britain, and indeed everywhere else. The system of Calvin is based on an unequal contract; and the great contested points of doctrine are woven up throughout Scottish history with the bargains, wars, and schisms of which they were often the occasion. The spirit of David Deans runs through the whole chronicle, and the language of theological argument and distinction came as readily from Scott's pen, when he chose, as that of profane litigation. Nearest to his own temper, no doubt, lay the spirit of simple faith and liberal piety, but he says little of his private mind on the matter. His interest in the fray of creeds seems to have been chiefly dramatic. This, in the novels, is truculent in colouring; he stands outside it and imagines it by a kind of feat, as in the picture of the preachers in *Old Mortality*, with their differing styles of eloquence and unreason. He sees also the comedy of the thing, and represents it triumphantly in the explosions of Mause Headrigg, that 'auld doited deevil' who defends her dogmas so urgently. Such pleasant, unexpected fruits could only spring from the rich soil of the national and historical novel.

The same catholicity drew Scott to portray the other northern nation, the wonderful strangers at his gates—the Highlanders. A faithful sketch of their domestic temper and custom can be

found in the forgotten story *Clan-Albin*, by Mrs. Johnstone, which was published in 1815, but mostly written, as the authoress assures us, before *Waverley*. The adoption of an unknown foundling by the simple community of Clan-Albin is the starting-point of a graceful idyll; there is an old woman with second sight, and also a piper. Scott, however, was the first to disclose the subtle, elusive talk of the race, their pride in hospitality, and their barbarous, though not savage, sense of honour. At first his Highlanders are either lightly comical, or somewhat turgid and Ossianic; and even in the later, or *post-diluvian* novels, there is something too much of that in the speech of Elspat MacTavish in *The Highland Widow*. The plain and manly delineation of her son Hamish is in contrast. But in *The Two Drovers*, no sort of falsetto mars the success. It is a real tragedy on a small scale, which begins gaily, announces itself by a petty squabble, explodes suddenly, and ends with the judicial summing-up and sentence on the murderer, Robin Oig. The legal ethics are set forth with Scott's usual relish—Oig has dirked his friend two hours after the affront, when there had been time for 'passion to cool, and reason to interpose,' and he is to be hanged. He cannot see he was wrong to attack an unarmed man. 'I give a life for the life I took, and what can I do more?' He is throughout consistent:

> While those present expected that the wound . . . would send forth fresh streams at the touch of the homicide, Robin Oig replaced the covering with the brief exclamation—'He was a pretty man!'

The study of young Conachar's cowardice[1] in *The Fair Maid of Perth* is laborious and painful in comparison with this. Such instances and traits could be multiplied without end from the novels; but their scope as historical inventions must now be considered more at large.

IV

There is no need to tarry among the scanty and futile precedents. There had indeed been an array, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and after, of pretences at historical fiction.[2] In Sophia Lee's work, *The Recess, or a Tale of Other Times* (1784-5), the most violent things are described in the most ladylike language, and the two heroines are daughters of Mary of Scotland and the Duke of Norfolk. They are secretly reared in a 'recess,' or private chamber, and emerge to suffer incredible adventures. Jane Porter's

Thaddeus of Warsaw (1803) is more endurable, but is not strictly historical; it is concerned with the doings of an interesting Polish exile in London, especially in Newgate. The language of sensibility is in full blast in this story, but there is some life and pace. *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), by the same writer, had an equal vogue, which only shows the nakedness of the land. Its hero is a melodramatic William Wallace; but here also there is a certain overflowing fervour and bogus picturesqueness which for a long time pleased the public. Both stories remained awhile alive after the Waverley Novels had begun, and *Thaddeus* was translated into various tongues.

Scott owed nothing to such precursors, and little to any. Of superb pieces of mimicry like Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, or of a masterpiece like Mme. de La Fayette's *La Princesse de Clèves*, he seems to have made no use. His 'General Preface' shows how he drifted into his work almost by chance. He explains his wish to do for Scotland what Miss Edgeworth had done for Ireland; to describe, namely, the inhabitants, and 'to procure sympathy for their vices and indulgence for their foibles.' He tells also how the Highland ingredient was 'favourable for romance'; how the reception of Strutt's *Queenhoo Hall*, with its archaisms, warned him off for the time; and how he found his old essay in fiction in a drawer, and reconsidered it. In all this there is little about history; the idea of finding an historical plot and personages that would yield a human interest only cleared itself slowly in his mind. He did not, like Shakespeare and Marlowe, begin with such an idea; nor was his inspiration, like theirs, born of a wave of patriot passion working all around him. Patriot he was, but his passion was first of all that of the observer, anxious to save the memory of persons and manners that were just fading out of mind. But the history play had only a sporadic life after its date of perfection, which is marked by *Henry the Fifth*, while the form invented by Scott was grafted into many literatures; nor are any of the younger trees of the forest so tall as to hide the patriarch. Still it lives; the leaves are green, save on a few dead and creaking branches, and the sap is in the trunk.

To Scott, history at first meant the history of the century in which he was born. The time of *Waverley* ('sixty years since') was near enough for him to touch on the lingering passions of the Jacobite, and far enough away to allow of the colouring, both genuine and theatrical, of romance. He knew the whole story of the beaten party, and saw it as in a crystal; and his ancestral sympathies, while they chanted in his ears

the pathos of the disaster, did not blind him. He knew the faults of the fallen, and was on his mettle to deal pretty fairly with the Lowland Whig. His power in this kind of work, if not greater, is more assured than when he describes earlier periods. The departure of Charles Edward and Redgauntlet is in a high strain of fateful and yet not bloody drama, far excelling the earlier passages of brawl and intrigue in *Waverley*, and woven better into the private story of the book. With his left hand and carelessly, yet with perfect persuasiveness, he manages the fortunes of the younger Redgauntlet, not without some good-natured contempt; but with his right, at the same time, he paints a great occasion, the finale of a long act in the national history, when the Wanderer is rowed away, and a Campbell cries Amen to the prayers of a Jacobite. In this situation there is the soul of romance, and there is also the gravity of the epic,—of history seen through the imagination.

When Scott turned to the Middle Ages, his treatment became at once freer and more uncertain, his phrase more romantic and invented. The feelings of Jacobite or Cavalier were in his blood, those of the Crusader only in his fancy. The humours and quips of the English or French, five or six centuries ago, were not like those of his own countrymen in Charles Edward's time: he had to read and study for them. As though he knew this, he enlivened *Quentin Durward* with the talk of Le Balafré and the Scottish archers. But his passion for writing upon things mediæval had been starved or distracted for five years, ever since he had finished *The Lord of the Isles*: and he now came back to them, having meantime practised in prose an instrument of greater tone and compass than the rhymed lay. Setting aside *Count Robert of Paris*, he wrote seven historical romances of which the time is laid in the Middle Ages, from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries inclusive. Four of these, *Ivanhoe*, *The Betrothed*, *The Talisman*, and *Castle Dangerous*, are tales of chivalry, turning on the point of honour and the quest for glory. The historic setting is but a pageant, and the political circumstances are somewhat wearily explained. In *Quentin Durward*, on the other hand, the history is carefully worked in after a reading of Comines, and is a real frame to the story. In *The Fair Maid of Perth* there is a curious amalgam: a larger allowance of citizen humours, and a formal tournament, and historic persons not far off; but the whole is a background for the study of Conachar and of his failure in conventional courage

and honour. The dramatic sympathy and the mercy with which this is described are not mediæval.

There is much in mediæval sentiment that never came home to Scott. To the religious and speculative note, the note of criticism or satire, the more ethereal and also the more reckless chords of romance, he hardly responded at all. *The Romance of the Rose*, and the Prologue to the *Decameron*, and *Piers Plowman*, leave no mark on him. But what he loved he loved thoroughly: not only the lighter charm of romance, and all its ceremonies and costume: but the soul of chivalry and adventure, drawn from Chaucer and Froissart: of ballad gaiety and good humour, drawn from the Robin Hood Ballads of the best period: and of Scottish patriotism, drawn from Barbour's *Bruce*, and embodied in *Castle Dangerous*. In *Ivanhoe* Scott, it has often been noticed, confounds two or three centuries together in his pictures of dress and usage, and even provides an Old English death-song, drafted in imitation of the 'scalds,' to whose 'wild strains' the Saxon Ulrica 'may not unnaturally be supposed to return' in her extremity. The book is not proof against the antiquary, but it lives none the less, and we are glad of many of the liberties that Scott takes. The real exemplar in the conduct of such a story is not Chaucer, but, as the author himself hints, Ariosto, who intertwists several narratives into one. Scott does this with effect, at some cost of harking back and explanations, and then knots his threads together with a light-hearted jerk. The winding of the horn interrupts several infamies at once, and Athelstane is raised from the dead to please the printer, Ballantyne, who was 'inconsolable on the Saxon being conveyed to the tomb.' Some things in *Ivanhoe* have been unjustly censured. The sudden death of Boisguilbert, the stage villain, 'a victim to the violence of his own contending passions,' was suggested by something Scott had seen in the Courts at Edinburgh. The wit of Wamba has been called forced and imitative, and he is no doubt of Elizabethan parentage. But there is more style, in the strict sense, in his speeches than in all the rest of the book. There is nothing subtle or fine in *Ivanhoe*, none of the reserve of the Scottish stories. It was written in haste and illness, and its art is of a different sort. One trick of narrative it has, which Scott practises elsewhere, and which rather suggests the coolness of the sportsman when he knocks the quarry on the head, though he has been excited in the chase. It is a kind of artful anti-climax. A beginning is highly managed and announced;

the suspense is grandiosely kept up; Ivanhoe rides into the lists, or Prince John taunts Locksley before the crowd. But the actual event is told in a level, expeditious way, as though the author were thinking of the next chapter. 'The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill: his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed.' 'As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.' 'A band of yeomen soon disposed of the ruffians, all of whom lay on the spot dead or mortally wounded.' Victor Hugo never has the sense to slacken the cords in this way. Scott keeps his head, and does not take his show too seriously, and this goes to his credit against the lurid ambitious passages in the dialogue.

The stories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries come midway, in reality and persuasive power, between the mediæval and the modern ones. The best of them, *Kenilworth*, *The Abbot*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, and *Woodstock*, depend for much of their excellence on the portraiture of the kings and queens who hold the stage. Scott had an instinctive knowledge of courtly sentiment and finesse, though he might sometimes dress it in too fine a style. The broad lines of selfish policy or dissembled ambitious passion, or of highbred oddity, he understood as well as if he had mixed in diplomacy. His monarchs have no touch of the intellectual passion that is found in Shakespeare's; but in his portraits he shows no little of Shakespeare's gift of developing the character along lines that are warranted by evidence or tradition, though not one word uttered may be historical. The dealing of Richard with John or Saladin, or of Louis XI. with the Duke of Burgundy, or, in another way, of Mary Queen of Scots with Lady Lochleven, are wonderful in their rightness, while the three portraits are in quite different styles. Cœur-de-Lion is little more than an excellent ballad-king. Louis XI. is a figure of high melodrama—a term that does not, so far as touches the action, exclude the dramatic or a certain distinctness of outline, but which implies a lively mechanical inlaying of consistent traits, rather than that self-unfolding of character through successive vital touches, which at once excites surprise without shocking expectancy. James I., in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, is a portrait of this latter and finer kind, alive and broadly humorous: yet caricature is eluded, and the laugh is not always against the king, whose kindness and conscious shrewdness save the fortunes of Nigel. The same kind of genial power is shown in such figures as Argyle (in *The Heart of Midlothian*), in the

Black Douglas (*Castle Dangerous*), and the old Earl of Crawford (*Quentin Durward*). This gallery of sovereigns and nobles, like Shakespeare's, has often fixed the popular conception of the originals.

V

Critics have looked askance at Scott's curious relationship with his readers. No doubt he ran after them; and the care he took to please them, to give them new fare before they were tired, and to behave generally like an honest catering playwright, is in contrast with the scornful scruple of Wordsworth or Flaubert, who wrote to satisfy themselves. He did not work in this haughty way; he watched the public as narrowly as he does any of his own *dramatis personæ*, and this accounts for many things in the Waverley Novels, including their existence. The public would not stand the White Lady of Avenel sweeping a heavy, angry man off his horse, and it was too strong that she should dig, or produce the illusion of digging, a new-made grave. After this it was well to be chary for a time of introducing bogles. It was tiresome to open with an historical essay, as in *Waverley*; if it must come, let it come later in the book, as it does in *Old Mortality*, where it gives less trouble. In his retrospective prefaces Scott explains how respectfully he had watched, how carefully he had stalked, the general taste from his hiding; with what a keen sense of the powers of the public to defend itself and slip away from him. He never made the same mistake with it twice. He seldom defends his work in defiance of its opinion; and this, though it may be part of his modesty, is no doubt a weakness. He seems to have judged by his reception, rather than by his conscience, whether he had written well. Such a mood is nothing akin to the solitary pride which conceives enduring form in silence and chisels it out patiently.

But Scott probably gained more than he lost by his tie with the invisible man, the average reader. For one thing, it was not the critics for whom he cared; he said that their judgments were too inconsistent to be of service to him. He treated the reader as Molière treated his housekeeper, as a touchstone. To this habit we owe some of his finest work, and his incessant fresh discoveries of his own talent. When the day came for him to redeem his debts and honour by his pen, an heroic turn is given to his attitude, and criticism is silent before his effort to work his vein for what it was worth in gold; all the more, that it was now he wrote such narratives as that

of Chrystal Croftangry, and *Wandering Willie's Tale*, which are as perfect as though they had been shaped by Tourgéniev's unalloyed desire for perfection. The prefaces to the collected edition tell the story of the novels, from the point of view of their reception, with all possible dignity. It has to be said that his courage in depicting situation, being affected by his sense of what the man in the pit or the stalls will endure, is curiously limited. He does not mind painful and bloody circumstance, if it comes in the course of battle, or of ambush, or of legal justice. The mutual slaughter of Cristal Nixon and Nanty Ewart is told with the brevity and relish of a saga. But he can be unfair to the dramatic suspense, which is apt to be first wound up and then conventionally relieved. The heroine seldom perishes; the leading gentleman escapes danger with a charmed life, though for no merit of his own. The interest hangs on ingeniously finding a way out for him; and this interest of *extrication*, however lively and real it be, is one of the meaner interests of the drama, though it befits tragi-comedy and of course romance. The play of character in an inextricable position is the supreme subject of tragic art, when the position is caused by and reflected in the play of the character itself. Scott in this way resembles his follower, the elder Dumas. His creatures, in general, are far more alive than those of Dumas, but he shrinks from exposing them to the full storms of life. Even Effie Deans marries Staunton, her seducer. What a story, if only, through some one's original spite or folly, she had been hanged like Cordelia, before the reprieve arrived! Balzac would not have scrupled to describe this. To put such a case is not to presume to write *The Heart of Midlothian*, but to point out in what its greatness does not lie.

This preference for a cheerful ending is not, however, wholly a concession to the gods of the theatre. A critic who is now coming into his own, Walter Bagehot,[1] defends the 'poetic justice' of these novels, as answering to the realities of life and as representing the awards of providence, which 'works on a scheme of averages.' Those who deserve to win or lose commonly, and in the long run, do so. Tragedy deals with the exceptions, romance with the average case. This view perhaps describes Scott's own instinct. It comes to saying that the romancer had better write romance—which deals only a moderate punishment to offenders—or choose some historical subject that does not end in disaster. Scott often makes the wicked perish and disappear; yet the lights are not turned on

them to the full, but on the less interesting figures who prosper at last; and in this way a comfortable sense is left on the mind of the way in which 'providence works.' In one of his reviews he defends this kind of treatment, and says that the picture of vice triumphant is 'as much out of place as a wen in an academic model'; a curious remark, that gives the clue to his rather naïve treatment of circumstance. There is much struggle and suspense, but its happy resolution is expected all the time, and so a kind of double consciousness is produced. Scott is placed and classified by his preference for this sort of art, which is not the lowest, and is sometimes nobly workable, and can rise above the pure pleasure of entertainment. For an example of a higher form of tragedy we must go to his own life. And yet this is miscalled a tragedy, for its splendour is epical and heroic rather; for the motive is honour, the conflict is that of a strong man with the weakness of the body, and the end is

To dyen whan that he is best of name.

The exceptions to Scott's favourite form of ending are of interest, especially in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *St. Ronan's Well*, and *Kenilworth*. In the first of these the stuff is that of a ballad. There is actually no such ballad; but there might have been one of the first rate, if the popular imagination had seized on the story of the Dalrymple family, upon which Scott founded that of Lucy Ashton. It would have been Scottish, tragical, and touched with presentiment and terror. The plot, though too complex as a whole for the hearers of *Lord Thomas and Fair Annie* or *Earl Brand*, has many conventions of the kind that they liked; the pledging and parting of the lovers, the mother's policy and cruelty, the preferred rival, the betrothal where the lover appears too late, the slaying of the bridegroom by the bride and her madness, the drowning of the lover in the quicksand as he rides to his duel with her brother. A ballad-monger would not have let the wicked mother escape, and she would have been not a mother but a 'stepdame.' But the spirit of the *Minstrelsy* is there, and it would be easy to say that *The Bride of Lammermoor* is Scott's greatest poem. It is in his diction, in the talk of Ravenswood and Lucy Ashton, that he swerves into romantic commonplace. But even there, and in the other parts of the book where he goes quite beyond the ballad-world, the colouring that he draws from that world is distinguishable. Indeed, he rises into a kind of acrid strength which is not common with

him. The interludes, though full of vigour—the talk of the roving companions Bucklaw and Craigengelt, and the antics of Balderstone and the gossips—do not make us laugh loud, any more than the chorus of the village hags or of the sexton :

> Folk may let their kindred shift for themsells when they are alive, and can bear the burden of their ain misdoings ; but it 's an unnatural thing to let them be buried like dogs, when a' the discredit gangs to the kindred—what kens the dead corpse about it ?

The book has been compared to *Romeo and Juliet* ; and there is certainly the same sense of fatality, and the same youthful and lyrical conception of tragedy ; young love, without any fault of its own, is slain by family hatred and circumstance, and by accidents which are natural effects of circumstance. For this sense of fatality to be unchecked, the construction has to be, as it is, accurate and strict ; no loose, picaresque plan, no impatient wind-up here. And the double tragic ending is wholly natural : it is not the novelist, but the poet who here indemnifies himself and us for his daily tribute to poetic justice and to the ' providential average.'

In *St. Ronan's Well*, a comedy of manners deepening into a tragedy of intrigue, Scott struck into more than one new vein of his genius ; and the catastrophe is constructed with a bolder irony than he shows elsewhere. The oscillations of hope and fear have a wider swing. The story seems at one point to be heading straight for the solution of tragi-comedy, for the fate which gathers round Clara Mowbray, and which through many chapters seems inevitable, is lightened, and seems to be averted, by the appearance of the old earthly providence Touchwood the nabob, who throws off his mask to play the part of a beneficent cousin. But then he is not in time ; the countermine he has been laying all through the book explodes too late to save Clara Mowbray. She dies, though her fame is righted ; and the irony is, we feel, at the cost not of a mere old nabob, but of life itself, with its everyday caprices that sweep away the innocent. The villain also dies ; but half-justice is more ironical than none. Tyrrel, the hero, lives on, but his story is over, though he becomes an earl. The chattering women and bullies vanish :

> lions and lionesses, with their several jackalls, blue surtouts, and bluer stockings, fiddlers and dancers, painters and amateurs, authors and critics, dispersed like pigeons by the demolition of a dovecot, have sought other scenes of amusement and rehearsal, and have deserted St. Ronan's Well.

Scott does not often bundle his puppets into the box with this kind of smack, or fly in the face of the romantic rule that the lovers must either both die or both live. But his tone is not that of the bitter philosopher, nor yet that of the entertainer who has turned impatient with the job of pulling the wires. There is no loss of temper; but he no longer dwells in that curious *arranged* world, with its 'scheme of averages,' that suffices him at other times. He is visited by a breath from another world altogether, which goes, in Newman's words, 'as though from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes'; and even if we think it is only the world of the exceptions, we see that it speaks to us more, and cuts deeper with its message, than that common 'providential' one. We must not pretend that Scott reasoned all this out; his turn was not for speculation; but an artist would cease to be an artist if he did not leave us with more definite ideas than it is right for him to formulate. The Introduction (1832) proves that Scott was more concerned with his characters than with his tragic structure. He shows a needless 'sense of temerity' in his choice of scene, which he defends as a natural setting for his fools, his eccentrics, and his traveller, who is 'partly taken from nature.' *St. Ronan's Well* warns us at every point that he never reached the limitations of his genius.

Another tragedy is that of *Kenilworth*, with its four villains and its butchered lamb Amy Robsart. Here there is neither ballad sentiment nor dramatic irony; indeed there is little drama at all, but only a pathos overspiced with melodrama, and causing discomfort and protest rather than pity. Scott's heart was not in this business, but in the pageant and the court politics. Leicester, who is unlike the real Leicester, is made a weakling in order to give prominence to the chief villain, Varney, a creature made in imitation of the old 'Italianate' tragedies; but Sussex and Raleigh and Elizabeth herself are alive; nor can the high romantic phrase conceal that instinct, already noted, for the moods, obeisances, and veering favours of a court, which is one of Scott's heirlooms from some earlier existence. The interview between the two earls in the presence at Greenwich is managed with a wonderful oscillation of the suspense, and the pride that was deep in Scott gave him an intuition of the same quality in Elizabeth, just as it had of a subtler edge of pride in Mary of Scotland. But all this matches *Kenilworth* rather with a history play containing a bloody incident than with a real tragedy. In the crowd of minor homely persons and humours we miss the Scots language.

Instead, there is a kind of Elizabethan comic bluster and hard animal spirits, which are visibly mimicked from the prose of the old citizen drama, Jonson's or Middleton's; and the loyal eccentrics, Wayland Smith and the jumping boy, are thought out, and put in for the sake of the plot, rather than truly invented.

These are exceptions; and there is another reason, his well-known carelessness in plotting [1] (remarked on by Lady Louisa Stuart and other good friends), why Scott never fully explored his own talent for tragedy. A comedy can scramble through with little plot, but a tragedy must have a good one if it is to convince us. Plot is distinguished from story. The story is the narrative as it moves on, and holds us, from point to point. The plot is the narrative, in its whole web, as we look back upon it. In *Tom Jones* plot and story move together and are one. This holds of hardly one of the Waverley Novels, unless it be *St. Ronan's Well*. The plot is often loosely attached to the real interest, as in the *Heart of Midlothian*, where the affairs of George Staunton and Madge Wildfire fail to interest. There is the same sort of rift in *Guy Mannering*. To say that Scott is a great story-teller and not a great plotter is therefore to say what every one knows, that his real power is in portraiture, in dialogue, and situation. The same may often be said of the plays of Shakespeare.

In his anonymous review [2] of the earlier novels, Scott admits that his 'heroes,' the Waverleys and Fairfords, are passive creatures and fail to dominate the crisis; the action is decided without their will. But here, swayed by a conventional conception of the hero, he is unjust to himself. Waverley and Fairford are not unreal; they are the more real for not being, like the heroes of ladies' romances, masters of events. They are not instances, like Ivanhoe or Morton, of featureless protagonists. They are drawn carefully, with contemptuous tolerance. They are natural young men of no distinction, they are types, and they happen to be the centre of dangerous adventures. They form part of the multitude of real beings whom Scott created; for he was not one of the writers who have nice theories of art but 'only talk of population.'

VI

The people whom Scott invented are more numerous and various, and their voices ring truer, than those of any novelist but Balzac. We go from the Waverley Novels to the *Comédie Humaine* as from one swarming city or countryside to another.

The traveller will find no third with such a hive of inhabitants. Balzac is the master-painter of man as a social animal. In weight of brain, in his vision of herded mankind and of their motives and fatal relationships, in fulness of evocative power, and in depth of philosophic comment, he is supreme over all but a few; and those few are poets. From this high seat Balzac is not dethroned by the excesses of his power or the vagaries of his style, which do not concern this comparison. In different ways, each of the two can write badly. But there are other likenesses, some of which arise from the confessed influence of the elder upon the younger writer. *Maître Cornélius* would hardly have existed without *Quentin Durward*, and the Border stories of Scott, with all their differences, offered a certain pattern for *Les Chouans*. There is throughout the same descriptive and historical instinct, although the history in the *Comédie* is the nearer to the time of the writer; the same painful fulness in the antiquarian setting and local disquisition; the same, or something of the same passion for basing a story upon matters of law and business. Of the two, Balzac rises higher and searches deeper; his mind is of another order altogether. But in one way Scott regains pre-eminence; he has the huge advantage of making the reader happier. He walks by nature and habit with a lighter step, through no such strange and lowering atmosphere, with a pure relish for the charm of the wayside, with a ringing humour and a Chaucerian vivacity. At his best, indeed, he is like Chaucer; while Balzac at his best—that is, in the *Contes Drolatiques*—resembles, as he wishes to resemble, one of the great sixteenth-century Frenchmen, Montaigne or Rabelais. Scott to the last has more youth, nay more boyishness in him; he is excited about the points of the next dog, or horse, or man, whom he may meet round the turn of the road. He has a clean artistic pleasure in such things and in the expression he finds for them, and he can almost make animals talk. Balzac misses all that, and easily overshoots.

Scott also keeps his pre-eminence when he is contrasted with the chief English novelists of the last thirty years. *Their* tales are charged with mental trouble and questioning, or with a high dark irony; Scott's are not. They comment often on the rough, self-satisfied, working morality of the world; and such a morality, purged and made gentler it is true, but still taking current codes and institutions for granted, is Scott's own. This chorus to the modern novel is sometimes

hopeful and astringent; it is so with Meredith; or it is not hopeful, and lacks any source of comfort except the conviction of truth; such a spirit is felt in *The Dynasts* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Scott lived and died long before these ideas were in the air, and was cheerfully deaf to the movements of his time from which they spring. The difference extends to form. The later styles call attention to themselves; they are picked and winnowed and curious; Scott's is not.

Hence there arise two familiar ways of criticising him. There is the criticism that has learnt little and sloughed nothing and still moves admiringly in something like Scott's own world of social and intellectual values. It has many voices from Ruskin downwards. Ruskin often praised Scott well, but was too narrow and capricious to make the necessary comparisons, so that here, as so often, there is a blight upon his commentary. But he and those who are with him are far likelier to get near to Scott than those who are preoccupied with later schools of art, or who are ridden by the false associations of painful, choice, and fastidious language that have gathered for half a century round the word *art*; or, again, who must have philosophy as a sauce to fiction. Such judges will be cold to Scott. But we must take care lest we deny him something which fifty years hence will be his own again; and where shall we be then? Mr. Pater, who did much to fix those esoteric associations of the words *art, style*, left the warning nevertheless; 'Scott's facility, Flaubert's deeply-powdered evocation of the "phrase," are equally good art.' He was speaking of style; but his words are just as true when extended to the representation of character, or to the way in which life and humanity are regarded. To read Scott is to let go the cheaper and retrieve the nobler meaning of the term *facility*. Sometimes, as we have seen, his handiwork is nice and can be scanned narrowly, like a miniature. In the picture of the Marquis de Hautlieu, not a trait is wrong; yet he may have written it very quickly. At other times we have to stand back, and not peer close, any more than we should at a big historical fresco. Sometimes, no doubt, we do not care to look again, or at all. But everywhere, even in the stories written under cruel stress, there is the same quality, which may be called facility in respect of the craftsmanship, and for which, as regards the effect, the word *popularity* can be borrowed from the best of Scott's early critics. This word is happily used by J. L. Adolphus,[1] in describing his narrative style in prose and verse.

The same easy openness which was remarked in his prose style is also a prevailing quality in his poetical composition, where, however, it appears not so such in verbal arrangement as in the mode of developing and combining thoughts. Few authors are less subject to the fault of over-describing, or better know the point at which a reader's imagination should be left to its own activity; but the images which he does supply are placed directly in our view, under a full noonday light. . . . His epithets and phrases, replete as they often are with poetic force and meaning, have always a direct bearing on the principal subject. He pursues his theme, in short, from point to point, with the steadiness and plainness of one who descants on a common matter of fact. . . . A poet accustomed to express himself in this simple, expanded, and consecutive style can readily transfer the riches of his genius to prose composition, while the attempt would be almost hopeless to one who delighted in abrupt transition and fanciful combination, and whose thoughts habitually condensed themselves into the most compendious phraseology.

This faithful and safe account of the style may be applied to the matter of the novels. Facility and popularity, thus explained, are their most glorious attributes. What with *Wuthering Heights*, and *Middlemarch*, and *The Portrait of a Lady*, we have all come to demand that we should be *stung* by fiction, just as we often are by life. Nor would we for anything miss that experience, nor could we if we would. But much that is most precious in real, as in represented, life, has after all no sting. And in the representation of this part of life Scott is sovereign amongst our novelists. His villains and tragedies, though skilfully staged, are in the last resort and with few exceptions entertaining and nothing else. We sit and watch and are pleased, but our applause is loud—it is not that applause of silence with which we listen to Emily Brontë's Heathcliff. Scott never hurts; there is his limitation, and also his greatness. He draws the surface; we are tempted to think he is not deep, because he does this, and because he does not hurt and sting. But he does not draw the surface superficially, save in his merely conventional pages. He draws it as a master. Nothing is so hard as to draw the surface in this way—which is not Smollett's way—except to go deeper still, in Shakespeare's way. The real clatter of the world, and the buzz of its open commerce; the talk of the Grassmarket, and the May games of Kinross fair; the conversation of Ochiltree and Moniplies and Fairservice; the colour and humours of the shooting at the popinjay, and the sly undercurrents of the scene; of these things the older

classical censors might have said, as they said of Shakespeare, that they are the fruits of 'nature' rather than of 'art.' But we have got over that false contrast, which only expresses the difference between one kind of art and another which is equal in honour. It is by the mass and the excellence of such art that Scott keeps his supremacy in Britain.

The world of the Waverley Novels is so far like the real world, that it evades formulæ and summary treatment. It is easy to see what regions of thought or passion Scott never thought of entering. It is not so easy to see the limits of the territories that he actually made his own, or to fix in words the impression of breadth and of power in reserve that he leaves. Behind it all is his rich and noble nature, with all its prejudiced and naïvely mercantile elements, with all its insuperable courage and indignant sense of honour. Of that nature, and of its instructive modes of expression, and of the various overlaying disguising voices that he found for it, we may have some further inkling by attending to his style, which has never been enough considered.

VII

Scott, in the person of Edward Waverley, confesses that 'it was in vain to attempt fixing his attention on . . . the beauty of felicitous expression.' This is spoken of his youthful habit in reading, but it may be equally true of the spirit in which he wrote his prose.[1] We do not think of him as 'fixing his attention' on his own words, on their beauty or felicity, with that temperate self-enjoyment of the careful craftsman which we trace in Gibbon. 'You profess,' said Lady Louisa Stuart, 'never knowing what you are going to write.' 'I have often been amused,' he states in the *Journal*, 'with the critics distinguishing some passages as particularly laboured, when the pen passed over the whole as fast as it could move, and the eye never again saw them, except in proof. Verse I write twice, and sometimes three times over.' But the effects of haste and labour are easily the same, and some of his swiftest prose is tedious. There is little sign of his having thought or theorised on the art of words, though his prefaces and reviews prove he had pondered much over the right kinds of incident, the artistic possibilities of national character, and the kinds and uses of the supernatural in fiction. Nevertheless Scott practised many shades and varieties of style, which must be discerned if we would come nearer to the heart of his genius.

Adolphus may be quoted again. He is comparing the manner of the 'great unknown' with that of Scott's acknowledged works. 'The style,' he says, 'seldom presses on our consideration,' and he proceeds:

> It is not to be recognised by the frequent or ambitious use of antithesis, inversion, reiteration, or climax; by sententious brevity, or sounding circumlocution: by studied points or efforts to surprise . . . the prose of these writers is on the contrary remarkable (if it can in any respect be deemed so) for plainness, and for the rare occurrence of ornament produced by an artful calculation of words. Nothing seems attempted or desired except to compose at as little expense of labour as possible consistently with the ease of the reader. Their style is therefore fluent, often diffuse, but generally perspicuous: if it is sometimes weakened by a superabundance, it is seldom darkened by a penury, of words.

The modern censures of Scott's writing come to little more than this; and it is hard to better the following eulogy:

> There is a winning air of candour in their address which deserves to be named among their chief excellences . . . they impart knowledge in the frank, unassuming, and courteous manner of a friend communicating with a friend. The use of irony or sarcasm appears repugnant to their natural openness and good humour . . . but there is a kind of serious banter, a style hovering between affected gravity and satirical slyness, in which both writers take an unusual delight.

Adolphus wrote in 1821, when the Waverley Novels were half through: the disclosure of the secret proved his acuteness, but unduly discounted his book; and his analysis only calls for some further distinctions, which we can now make with all Scott's works before us. Of his prefaces, of his lives of the poets, of his easygoing narrative and notes of his *Journal*, indeed of his normal way of writing, it is admirably true. But Scott's natural style is often overlaid, and that in sundry ways, with some kind of superadded film, or surface change, which is created by his relation to his reader at the moment. The introductions by the 'Author of Waverley' read differently from those which he afterwards signed with his name. The historical disquisitions in the novels are not light, in spite of his wish to make the chronicle lively. He tried to get the weight and solidity of history without being abstract or formal; it was to be epical or dramatic in cast. And he succeeds when he gets to historical character and anecdote, or to big scenic occurrences. In *The Heart of Midlothian* the style is close-girt and disciplined, like the march of the rioters against Porteous;

as soon as the tale becomes concrete, it ceases to lumber, and the writing becomes easy, classical, and strong.

How were his kings and persons of quality to converse? He had to find a style for them, as Wordsworth had to find one for his shepherds. But the task was harder in prose, for there was no tradition to help. Scott could easily have made King Richard, as he had made the Bruce, talk well enough in rhyme. But in prose, while helped by his study of Froissart and the best chroniclers, he had to compound a language. He did this triumphantly; and the talk of the Chevalier, of Mary of Scotland, of Queen Caroline, shows every noble gradation of his power; while that of Norna the sibyl and Ulrica the Saxon, and even that of Cœur-de-Lion and of Louis the Eleventh, show the dangers of his more romantic, fabricated manner. Indeed, his strength and weakness come out in such passages as the interview of Hobbie Elliot with the Black Dwarf, where the idiom of the homely speaker is quite right, and that of the other is intolerable; a perfect instance of sham dramatic contrast.

'Muckle obliged for your good will; and I wad blithely gie you a bond for some o' the siller, or a wadset ower the lands o' Wideopen. But I dinna ken, Elshie; to be free wi' you, I dinna like to use siller unless I ken it was decently come by; and maybe it might turn into sclate-stanes, and cheat some poor man.'

'Ignorant idiot!' retorted the Dwarf; 'the trash is as genuine poison as ever was dug out of the bowels of the earth. Take it—use it, and may it thrive with you as it hath done with me!'

The loftier diction of Scott's prose must not be judged by excesses of this kind, even if it is a little faded now in its braver colours and its set eloquence, and if there is not much in it that matches the rarest of his lyrical or martial verse. What helps it through is the suffusion of humour, irony, or banter, which keeps it from going too far, and which is felt even in the utterance of his kings and queens. He has also a great resource in one element which bulks large both in his description and dialogue. This is the talk, which is ever in the mouth of the sovereigns and nobles in the novels, about tilting, hunting, shooting, war, hawking, or archery; it is not too technical, and holds us because it held Scott so strongly himself. It comes as well from his common people as from his persons of quality, and serves to link all classes together, and makes for naturalness and gaiety. If Prince John and Locksley were to talk on archery at all, it is hard to see how they could have done it better. Scott's immense mass of floating knowledge

about pastime, heraldry, dogs, horses, even tactics—all of it ready to his hand in its careless but not disorderly wealth, is another of the things that remind us of Shakespeare. His followers got up such knowledge, but he could watch them securely, in his own lifetime, toiling after him. None even of the best of them, in a later day, like Dumas the elder, had this advantage in the same measure, to enliven their style.

One hampering influence upon his language may be roughly described by saying that Scott was too much of a gentleman, or too purely one, to write tragical or passionate dialogue, between educated persons, in English, with perfect ease. He often seems too shy or stoical to write freely, so that when he does break loose he drops into a false manner. This is not the case in his lyric or in his Scots prose. His English prose may have been hurt by the bad tradition that came down from Richardson and was still rife. Whatever the cause, it is easy to find examples of this difficulty of utterance:

'Sir William Ashton,' said Ravenswood, 'I pray you, and all who hear me, that you will not mistake my purpose. If this young lady, of her own free will, desires the restoration of this contract, as her letter would seem to imply—there is not a withered leaf which this autumn wind strews on the heath, that is more valueless in my eyes. But I must and will hear the truth from her own mouth—without this satisfaction I will not leave this spot. . . . Now, choose,' he said, drawing his sword with the right hand, and, with the left, by the same motion, taking a pistol from his belt and cocking it, but turning the point of one weapon and the muzzle of the other to the ground—'choose if you will have this hall floated with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive interview with my affianced bride, which the laws of God and the country alike entitle me to demand.'

All recoiled at the sound of his voice, and the determined action by which it was accompanied; for the ecstasy of real desperation seldom fails to overpower the less energetic passions by which it may be opposed. The clergyman was the first to speak. 'In the name of God,' he said, 'receive an overture of peace from the meanest of his servants.' . . .

The careful description of the weapons is here in odd contrast with the melodramatic tint of the talk, which is composed in a poor tradition. There is a great deal of this in the novels; and in the highly-wrought scenes of a tale like *Ivanhoe*, where the time is put far back, and the archaisms of supposed chivalrous language are superadded, the frigid effect is only increased. It is a manner, which in James, Ainsworth, and the mob of successors became worse, and found burial in the parodies of

Thackeray. It would be ungrateful to cite the scenes between Waverley and Flora MacIvor:

'Incomparable Flora!' said Edward, taking her hand, 'how much do I need such a monitor!'

'A better one by far,' said Flora, gently withdrawing her hand, 'Mr. Waverley will always find in his own bosom, when he will give its small still voice leisure to be heard.'

Even in such passages the matter is never mean; it is only the words that are wrong; but then the words are everything. It is actually some such impulse of high or reserved feeling that forces Scott back upon unreal phrase, and forbids him to find the speech that Emily or Charlotte Brontë were to command. It would be cold-blooded indeed to quote Scott's love-letters on a point of style; but in those written to Charlotte Charpentier, afterwards his wife, though there is no rhetoric, there is a bookish phrase, an official diction, which is easily seen to be the fruit of delicacy and knightly feeling. We have, to be sure, nothing that he may have written to the other lady whom he had loved.

But Scott's prose is full of surprises, and it is never safe to predict that he will write ill, even in a vein of which the dangers are manifest. This is seen in his passages of lyric oratory, which ring alternately false and true. When he fails, it is not hard to see why; he is lured by the strained, shadeless diction of melodrama, or by the supposed need of giving antique colour. And when he succeeds he is a great artist. The outburst of Claverhouse in *Old Mortality* is an instance; Scott had not to go far from himself in order to find the right words: it is like the very best passages of his verse, and the diction is right by instinct, even if it be more that of a speech than of a conversation:

But in truth, Mr. Morton, why should we care so much for death, light upon us or around us whenever it may? Men die daily—not a bell tolls the hour but it is the death-note of some one or other; and why hesitate to shorten the span of others, or take over-anxious care to prolong our own? It is all a lottery—when the hour of midnight came, you were to die—it has struck, you are alive and safe, and the lot has fallen on those fellows who were to murder you. It is not the expiring pang that is worth thinking of in an event that must happen one day, and may befall us on any given moment—it is the memory which the soldier leaves behind him, like the long train of light that follows the sunken sun—that is all which is worth caring for, which distinguishes the death of the brave or the ignoble.

This is not mere lofty detachable commonplace; it springs straight from the situation and the character of the speaker, and it is the comment of Walter Scott the poet on the crisis from which he has just freed his hero. It is none the worse, given the atmosphere of romance, for the inversion, certainly more native to verse, in *light upon us or around us whenever it may*; nor yet for the inlaid blank line, *the memory which the soldier leaves behind him*, for this is at once followed by a true cadence of poetic prose, which defies any metrical suggestion: *like the long train of light that follows the sunken sun.* The only phrases that can be called stereotypes, or *clichés*, are *shorten the span* and *the expiring pang*; but the note of talk is at once retrieved by *those fellows* and *It is all a lottery.* The diction, for the rest, is plain, brief, full of short, full knelling sounds, *die daily, bell tolls, hour, care, light, befall, brave.* How far all this is instinct and how far study matters little; yet we cannot doubt that Scott is here, unlike Edward Waverley, 'fixing his attention on the beauty of felicitous expression.'

The endless rightness and variety of Scott's lowland or border diction, both in comic and in serious scenes, must be left to a Northerner to praise fitly. The dialect of town and shire, of different social layers, of different individuals, is used with a wealth, with a natural careless inexhaustible flow, that was a new thing in prose. No one had made more than petty or casual use of anything but the southern 'standard English.' Miss Edgeworth had done well with the Anglo-Irish; but Scots now became, to a public quickened by reading Burns, the key to a new world of humour and character. Many of the persons who talk prose in the plays of Shakespeare are less real and entertaining than those who talk Scots in the Waverley Novels. But these, again, are more like the humourists whom we meet in Ben Jonson's earlier comedies, before his hand had stiffened. The baron of Bradwardine, with his iterations and his Latin, is a Jonsonian creation; and of Dugald Dalgetty the like might be said. Pleydell, and Jarvie, and Balderstone sometimes suggest the same writer. Jeanie Deans is of another kind; she has no manner, and speaks in the universal style.

Some of these Scottish speakers, such as Davie Gellatley or Madge Wildfire, are, no doubt, beings of literary parentage. They are not all alike successful, and their language is nearer to that of the poetic drama than of the novel. The poet in Scott seems to ache to be up again and doing; and, when he breaks out into lyric, is himself again. But the ambitious, imaginative

prose is another matter; and the mixture is felt in a passage like that in which Madge Wildfire exclaims:

'I dinna ken what makes me sae sleepy—I amaist never sleep till my bonny Lady Moon gangs till her bed—mair by token, when she 's at the full, ye ken, rowing aboon as yonder in her grand silver coach—I have danced to her my lane sometimes for very joy—and whiles dead folk came and danced wi' me—the like o' Jock Porteous, or ony body I had kenned when I was living—for ye maun ken I was ance dead mysell.'

Here the poor maniac sang in a low and wild tone:

'My banes are buried in yon kirkyard
Sae far ayont the sea,
And it is but my blithesome ghaist
That 's speaking now to thee.'

The native, ebullient Scots of dialogue, which is the author's prime resource as an humourist, is freshest in the earlier novels, and is the language of the Ochiltrees and Dinmonts. In those of the third period some of the *race* may be lost; for such work to be done well good spirits are necessary, and high spirit is not sufficient. Some youthful lack of husbandry is needed for the imagining, in merry hour, of the speech of Dugald Dalgetty: the children of a sadder middle age, which is economical perforce, may be of a finer, but will be of a less hearty complexion. One such later offspring, born when Scott was rallying his despondency and his powers to save his honour, is Chrystal Croftangry, who introduces the second series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*. Croftangry relates his life, his commonplace bittersweet experience, not so much sweet as bitter; yet he relates it in tones less of bitterness than of *desiderium* and muffled self-reproach. It is by far the most *inward*, perhaps the most personal, of Scott's shorter sketches. The deep, sure note of regret and retrospect, the rueful but essentially humorous turn of the language, the sense that the gift of humour is some offset if no remedy for the past—all this is unlike anything else in the novels: only the earlier portrait of the Marquis de Hautlieu has an equal delicacy. Croftangry's story stands beside the usual medley of the novels much as the epistles introducing *Marmion* stand beside the body of the rhymed romances. There are two piercing scenes, and Scott, often as he stirs and delights, does not often pierce: one, when Chrystal, after a youth of debt and riot, has wandered abroad and made a man of himself, if a somewhat broken man, and comes back home, and finds the old lawyer, who had helped

him over his scrapes, in second childhood but able to awake and greet him once before a last relapse: the other, when he visits incognito the 'governante' of his mother's house, and finds her in terribly competent and virulent possession of her Scotch tongue. He hears what she has to say on his far-away youthful misdoings, and goes away uncertain whether he has been recognised.

The higher lyrical grace and genius of Scott, with its rare ineffable moments, standing out from the gallant soldierly vigour which bore him with a tune on his lips through the day's march, has come to be acknowledged; but in his prose also there is the counterpart of this refining element, carrying him up into a kind of genius other than that which stamps his ordinary page. To watch for this exceptional mood and its expression, coming as they often do only to disappear too quickly, is well for the critic of Scott, who need concern himself little with the sorrier task of trying to guess what lawful but worldly influences, or what innocent but effectual distractions, kept him from rising to it oftener, or sustaining it longer. The task of discrimination is the harder, because his utterance in his stories has to be impersonal and dramatic, and the best of his soul is apt to appear merely in some finer or more pensive trait of tenderness or humour than is customary; and also because his shyness and dignity make him say delicate things in an imperfect and conventional style, perhaps from some erroneous notion of what is the right language for solemn matter. It is, once more, when he uses the Scots that the veil between his heart and that of his reader is thinnest:

'I wad hae putten on a cap, sir,' said Jeanie, 'but your honour kens it isna the fashion of my country for single women; and I judged that being sae mony hundred miles frae hame, your Grace's heart wad warm to the tartan,' looking at the corner of her plaid.

'You judged quite right,' said the Duke.

There is much of this pure stuff of humanity in the novels; and there might have been more, had it not been variously hindered by the high-pitched, noble but still artificial diction demanded for the big historical dramas, by the eager pages on costume and antiquities, and by the rest of the web connecting the narrative. In his stories Scott rarely drops the mask, or speaks in the strain that is heard on every page of the *Journal*. In one passage of *Woodstock*, written under the recent stress, there is a breath that carries

the words far beyond their actual triteness. It is in the epilogue; the characters of the story, with whom we have lived so long, are swept in a sentence past long years of intervening life:

> Years rush by us like the wind. We see not whence the eddy comes, nor whitherward it is tending, and we seem ourselves to witness their flight, without a sense that we are changed; and yet Time is beguiling man of his strength, as the winds rob the woods of their foliage.

In such reminiscent prose much of the finer part of Scott is revealed, and he is never a greater writer than when he is speaking of himself. The English of the *Journal* is of no period. Many men are rhetoricians in soliloquy, who would be natural in company. The *alter ego* whom they are addressing has a certain pose, and is a critic of language, draped in dignity, and prophetic or penitential. This is never felt with Scott. Macaulay is honest when alone, and puts off rhetoric, but he has a certain tone of emphasis and coarseness; nor has he Scott's sad advantage of having been unfortunate. Apart from the pride and piety, the modesty and courage of the *Journal*, it shows everywhere the constituents of the author's natural style—the anecdote, the Scots word, the Latin quotation, the snatch of English verse, the proverb. These are things that bubble from his mind, and often help out his public writing just when we are beginning to think it wanting in lightness. Whatever else of Scott's may lose its colour with time, the *Journal* cannot do so, with its accurate, unexaggerated language of pain. Here is an average example, dated not long after Lady Scott's death, and a little longer after the loss of his prosperity:

> Arrived here yesterday before five o'clock. Anybody would think, from the fal-de-ral conclusion of my journal of yesterday, that I left town in a very gay humour—*cujus contrarium verum est.* But nature has given me a kind of buoyancy, I know not what to call it, that mingles even with my deepest afflictions and most gloomy hours. I have a secret pride—I fancy it will be so most truly termed—which impels me to mix with my distresses strange snatches of mirth 'which have no mirth in them.' In fact, the journey hither, the absence of the affectionate friend that used to be my companion on the journey, and many mingled thoughts of bitterness, have given me a fit of the bile.

This is as well in its kind as the self-lashings of Carlyle, and gives the temper of the speaker just as faithfully.

VIII

Scott threw on the market huge bales of miscellaneous prose,[1] and much of it is now scarcely food even for bookworms. The mass of his mechanical industry, like that of Southey, saddens and astonishes. His big *Life of Napoleon*; his memoranda of the year 1814-5, published as *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*; his *Letters from Mungo Malagrowther, Esquire, on the proposed Change of Currency* (1826); the letterpress that he made for the pictures in the *Border Antiquities* (1814), and in the *Provincial Antiquities of Scotland* (1825); —these things do not live, and did not live very long. But from them, and from Scott's critical, editorial, and historical prose a selection ought to be made. His haste and frequent heaviness, his prolixity in composition, have often enough been blamed and have punished themselves. But the colour and zest of his narrative, the diffused mellow sagacity and charity of his comment, strike the reader continually. Even in the *Life of Napoleon* (really a sketch of the Revolution and its sequel), although it is prejudiced task-work founded on imperfect materials, the narrative and anecdotal passages are full of vigour and dramatic feeling. The *Tales of a Grandfather* (1827-30) is not compressed in style, but it is not a book that we wish were shorter. It keeps its charm, which is that of a historical novel tied more strictly than usual to the facts. It is not at all journeyman-work; it has the proportion and the tone of a narrative that has been long in the memory; and it is still one of the best of means for reconciling the childish mind, unawares, to the existence of history.

There is no dispensing with Scott as a critic and biographer. In his longest memoirs, those of Dryden and Swift, he is both these things at once. The *Life* in each case embodies a running literary commentary; the two aspects are not formally separated, as they are in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. There are in Scott few of the memorable sentences which Johnson carves in every paragraph; and his unit of style is not the maxim or the epigram. There is nothing of the air of a judge's charge. In recompense, there is more of the true effect of narrative, of a living and puzzling piece of history, rather than of a case that has been decided and put upon the shelf. Scott shoulders his way through fact and argument, by no means lightly or swiftly, but with a gallant energy and with a wide-awake equity of temper. The *Dryden* is a judicious and persuasive plea for the defence, in a suit that cannot

yet be said to be closed; but it would be hard to make a better one for the sincerity of Dryden's changes of opinion. As a critic Scott is here a child of the eighteenth century; he is the last great writer who accepts and proclaims Dryden as an English poet of the first rate. The *Swift* is also defensive, but less satisfactory. As a biography, indeed, it is better than its promise, which is merely to 'condense the information' of the five or six preceding writers who had attempted the same task. The aim was to weaken the adverse legend which represented Swift as a mere self-seeker and something of a traitor to his cloth. In detail Scott often succeeds; and while later research has discredited some of his authorities and conclusions, it has also justified, from sources not at Scott's disposal, Swift's motives for his alliance with the Tory party. But Scott could not understand Swift's 'Titanism,' and thinks of the *Tale of a Tub* as a 'simple and obvious' party squib. The *Life* leaves the impression of a great eccentric, full of queer perplexing traits while sound at bottom; but it gives little inkling of the depths and recesses of a great man, whose transparency and simplicity of expression are an almost impenetrable disguise.

The *Lives of the Novelists* and the studies of fiction in the *Quarterly Review* leave little for the critic to add or deprecate. Scott's leniency of judgment towards minor writers can easily be overstated, and is more often a result of courtesy and good form than of artistic blindness. His mode of stating his reserves is not that of his day; there is none of the sword-work of Lockhart or the shambles-work of Gifford; and there is still less of Wilson's headlong praise or railing. There is, perhaps, little philosophic comment, and little that is high-inspired. The tone is that of a generous but acute fellow-craftsman, who offers gentle, sometimes fatal, suggestions to Maturin, or Holcroft, or Cumberland, or to their shades. His manly defence of the morality of Fielding, his criticisms on that of *Pamela*, his praise of the variety and profusion of Smollett, have not been excelled. All that Scott says about his own art is of interest. In his review of Miss Austen he defends his own habit of filling out his tales with what may be called connective tissue:

> Let any one cut out from the *Iliad*, or from Shakespeare's plays, everything (we are far from saying that either might not lose some parts with advantage, but let him reject everything) which is absolutely devoid of importance and of interest *in itself*; and he will find that what is left will have lost more than half its charms. We

are convinced that some writers have diminished the effect of their works by being scrupulous to admit nothing into them which had not some absolute, intrinsic, and independent merit. They have acted like those who strip off the leaves of a fruit-tree, as being of themselves good for nothing, with the view of securing more nourishment to the fruit, which in fact cannot attain its full maturity and flower without them.

This was said in 1821, and it is true that *The Pirate* is not the most encouraging commentary upon it; but it is a good instance of Scott's critical shrewdness, and also of his manner, which has itself some of the charm of an old-fashioned garden, half-formal and half-familiar, with no lack either of fruit or leafage. It is easy to see, in general, what Scott took from romance, and what a mighty impulse he gave to it; and also how wonderful was his intermittent gift of song; but we sometimes feel, after all, that romance is something acquired, or only second nature, in him, and that he is really a creature, not essentially poetical, of the age of good sense and daylight humanity.

The influence of Scott upon British and foreign fiction can hardly be measured, and no estimate is here attempted. Some of its more immediate traces in England, Scotland, and Ireland will be noticed in the next chapter. The endless direct imitations are of less consequence; Scott's real legacy was the enlargement of the horizon of the novel, through one great and fertile idea. This was, simply, the revelation of the past, and of the whole scenery and play of national character, as material not merely for the poetic drama or the quasi-epic narrative in verse, or for the historian, or for the painter, but for inventive prose. To the application of this idea there are, in the nature of the case, no limits. Scott's true power is seen in his quickening of talents unlike his own, and of creative work that was outside his own range. The book that will narrate this permanent and international service has not been written, and would require a syndicate of authors. In France,[1] above all, the seed bore fruit during his own lifetime, in the first stories of Victor Hugo, including *Notre-Dame de Paris*, in Mérimée's *Charles IX.*, and in De Vigny's *Cinq-Mars*; the elder Dumas and Stendhal, besides Balzac, came soon afterwards. But in almost every country—in Germany, in Holland, in Russia—a distinct, if sometimes transient, group or school of Scott's disciples is recorded.

CHAPTER XII

THE OTHER NOVELISTS

I. Influence of Scott: English successors, such as Horace Smith and Leigh Hunt. G. P. R. James and Harrison Ainsworth, not included here. Scottish fiction: Moir's *Mansie Wauch.* John Galt, his productiveness; *Annals of the Parish, The Entail, The Provost, The Ayrshire Legatees.* Andrew Picken. Michael Scott.

II. Miss Ferrier: her characteristics and personages: view of poetic justice and didactic element. *Marriage, Inheritance, Destiny.*

III. Irish fiction: Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson); *The Wild Irish Girl, O'Donnel, The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys.* Michael and John Banim: *Tales of the O'Hara Family,* etc. Gerald Griffin, *The Collegians.* T. Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends* and *Killarney Legends.*

IV. English fiction: Miss Mitford's *Our Village.* Eastern Tales: T. Hope, *Anastasius,* its veracity of colouring. J. J. Morier, *Hajjî Baba in Ispahan* and *Hajjî Baba in England*: other stories. Trelawny's *Adventures of a Younger Son.*

V. Thomas Love Peacock: the commentator and satirist of 'romance'; parallel with Samuel Butler. Poems: *Rhododaphne,* etc., and lyrics. Plan and style of his fictions; his stock of characters; opinions, shown in *Crotchet Castle, Nightmare Abbey, Melincourt,* etc. Romantic satires: *Maid Marian, The Misfortunes of Elphin.*

I

THE novelists who appeared after *Waverley*[1] fall into scattered groups, and it goes hard with any one of them but he betrays the influence of Scott. The story of national life and manners, in Ireland as well as in Scotland, takes a new life from his example, and comes to free itself more or less from his shadow. In England, though he has many disciples, they are mostly either insignificant, or they belong to the following period. Such a tale, for instance, as the *Brambletye House* (1826) of Horace Smith owed its vogue chiefly to the imitative boldness of the undertaking. Cromwell and Milton, Charles the Second and Monmouth and Rochester, are all introduced, and all speakers; the thread is the adventures of a young Cavalier who witnesses the Plague and the Fire of London. This was a heavy undertaking even for so accomplished a wit. There is more literary quality in Leigh Hunt's *Sir Ralph Esher* (1832), which is laid in the same period, and where some of the same persons reappear. The two most popular historical novelists

in the immediate wake of Scott had no particular talent except that of the melodramatist. The earlier, George Payne Rainsford James, produced his *Richelieu* in 1829, with Scott's encouragement, and found many buyers for his numerous works through a whole generation. The other, William Harrison Ainsworth, who has decidedly more energy and colour than James, but less than no style, began in 1834 with *Rookwood*, and was prolific during a still longer period. These writers are not in the true line of development of the English novel. Before 1832 fresh types of fiction are seen arising, which prepare the way, obscurely enough, for the great producers of the next age. *Sketches by Boz* began in 1834, *The Yellowplush Papers* came out three years after. The beginnings of Disraeli, with *Vivian Grey* (1826) and *The Young Duke* (1829), and of Lytton, who started in 1827 with *Falkland* and *Pelham*, are only named here as landmarks; and the influence of Byron upon their temper and style of portraiture is at least as strong as that of Scott. The rather vulgar stories of Theodore Hook belong to the next period, though they begin to appear before 1830. Of English, as distinct from Scottish and Irish writers, this chronicle has to name Miss Mitford, who continues the nicer and more unassuming tradition of feminine art; the group, represented by Trelawny, Hope, and Morier, who turn to Eastern life, and furnish a kind of prose counterpart, or corrective, to Byron's representations of it; and Peacock, the artist and arch-humourist, who stands alone, and is a kind of genially mocking chorus to the rest. Many names must be slighted, such as that of George Croly, whose grandiose *Salathiel*[1] (1827) has a kind of bastard splendour in its rhythms and its descriptions.

While the Waverleys were appearing, the petty Scottish novel[2] arose and flourished by their side, exploring a social world that Scott had only brushed in his big, humorous fashion or had passed by altogether. The scene is the country town, the village, the laird's household, the manse, the cottage, or the shop. The method is minute, veracious, and somewhat oppressive. We thank heaven often enough that we have not to live among the personages of Galt and Moir; we are only too sure that they are real. Their lives are apt to be stuffy reading; but air is let in upon the page, and the imagination is refreshed, by many a stroke of pathos, and above all by the poetry of the native religion, which redeems the speech of the good prosaic minister or tradesman. None of these rural chronicles has been more popular in Scotland than *The Life*

of Mansie Wauch, Tailor in Dalkeith, Written by Himself, which appeared in *Blackwood's*, and was reprinted in 1828. The author, David Macbeth Moir, wrote copiously in that magazine under the initial of 'Delta.' He made much gentle imitative verse; but his talent is best seen in this tale, written mostly in broad Scots. It consists of a series of small, blunt anecdotes, told in a lively way enough and with endless cachinnation by the tailor-humourist, whose character, both canny and foolish, timid except on a few great occasions, and complacent beyond bearing, is certainly stamped on the memory. The seething life, gossip, and clamour of a small town are most faithfully represented by Moir.

The sixty publications of John Galt (1779-1839), enumerated by himself,[1] include, besides his novels, a row of biographies and books of travel, and dramas, and operas, and verses. His autobiography reveals a curious vagrant career, a very considerable streak of self-importance, an appalling industry in book-production. He manages to make his memories of the Duke of York, of Mrs. Clarke, and of Byron tolerably vivid to the reader, and his so-called *Life of Byron*, like his *Letters from the Levant*, won some attention. Many of the figures in his stories are like sharp and vivid steel engravings, and not even his prolixity and inequality can obscure his gift. Novels, indeed, he refuses to call his delineations; they have, he says, no 'consistent fable,' and nothing by way of thread except 'the recurrence on the scene of the same individuals.' For this very reason Galt leaves us with the same sense of disconnectedness, of the dense painful texture of things, as real life. *The Annals of the Parish* (1821), the most perfect of his tales in tone and keeping, was composed earlier than *Waverley*, was declined by Constable on the ground that 'Scottish novels would not do,' was unearthed afterwards, and was praised by Scott, the reviewers, and the public. It is the prose analogue of Crabbe's *Parish Register*, but is otherwise arranged and presented. The minister, Micah Balwhidder, sets down the annual chronicle of his parish during the first fifty years of George III. His matter-of-factness, essential goodness, simple cunning, and pastoral watchfulness, are drawn by himself in the most masterly and unconscious way, and much of the humour lies in his solemn want of perspective:

> The An. Dom. 1763 was, in many a respect, a memorable year, both in public and in private. The King granted peace to the French, and Charlie Malcolm that went to sea in the Tobacco trader came home to see his mother.

These invasions of 'public events,' and their impingement upon the concerns of the parish of Dalmailing—the loss of a son in the war, the setting up of a cotton mill, the appearance of some Irish refugees—vary the still chronicle, and the whole effect is that of a piece of history seen through near-sighted eyes. The effect is similar in *The Provost* (1822), a duller chronicle, with a few stirring scenes interposed. The Provost of the town of Gudeman relates his own career and ambitions; the irruption of a pressgang, a duel, an execution, are described, and well, but the domestic tone prevails.

Galt's work is not always so gentle. He is sometimes like a Lowland Zola on a small scale. *The Entail* (1823), which both Scott and Byron are reported to have read thrice, recalls the method of the 'Rougon-Macquart' series, in that the whole life of a family is related unto the third generation. They are a litigious crew, and every one of them is injured by the legal but monstrous procedure of the founder, the self-made packman, Claud Walkinshaw, who diverts an entail from his eldest son in order to grasp a larger slice of a landed inheritance. He settles the estate on the second son, an imbecile; his plans miscarry and spread misery and confusion, and he dies after a sudden explosion of religious remorse, for which we are ill prepared, and which Jeffrey justly called 'a little too romantic.' Zola has the same sneaking kindness as Galt for this kind of sudden escape from his own realism. The Walkinshaw family race are drawn at full length—the curmudgeonly brother, the scheming hussy, the good young couple, the terrible old dame, 'Leddy Grippy,' and the lawyers, virtuous and crooked, who intervene. No technicality is spared us; the law is elaborately got up. Galt has none of Zola's greatness of canvas or ideal, or of his æsthetic theory; but, instead, a fund of dour vernacular humour and a fitful, most genuine poignancy. The examination in court of Wattie, the idiot, with his delusion about his lost infant, the 'wee Betty Bodle'; the shipwreck; and the discomfiture of the lawyers by the 'Leddy Grippy,' are all scenes worthy of any novelist of that age. Galt is like Zola in another way; he swamps himself in his own profusion, and his genius—for genius he possesses—is best seen in a selection. This is true of *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1821), one of the last examples of a dying method; it is a string of letters written home by the members of a simple-souled, loquacious family, who repair to London to claim an inheritance. It is full of good obvious fun and also of sly strokes. Among Galt's numerous other

tales may be named his ambitious and less successful *Ringan Gilhaize*, a novel of the Covenanters, and *Sir Andrew Wylie* (1822), which, though over-long, is noteworthy for the title-character, an odd blunt humourist of a Scot, full of brains and benevolence, who rises from lawyer's apprentice to baronet; a pleasant variation on the old theme of the good boy's progress in life.

Only a glance at the other Scottish novelists of the time can here be spared. Lockhart is noticed in the next chapter. *The Dominie's Legacy* (1830), the chief work of Andrew Picken, is another homely and vivid record. But a relief from the fiction of private and domestic life is to be found in the bluff, Smollettesque sketches of open-air adventure by Michael Scott, whose *Tom Cringle's Log* and *Cruise of the Midge* are excellent in the picaresque kind. Scott has much of the freshness and boyish spirits of his successor Marryat. His books are full of gore, gallantry, and jokes that leave bruises behind them. Both of them appeared in *Blackwood's*, the first in 1829-30, the second in 1834-5, anonymously; and they are worthy of its tradition, though not free from the odd over-heated manner that somewhat chills a later generation. The same journal also fathered another story of war and wounds, which is more or less autobiographical. *The Subaltern* (1825), by George Gleig, is less a novel than a memoir of experience as a soldier in the Peninsular War; it is readable, unadorned, and not long, and is a useful 'footnote to history.' Gleig afterwards became chaplain-general, and wrote many other works, chiefly of military biography and history, and lived a very long time. Another officer, Captain Thomas Hamilton, also produced a lively and curious document of manners, *The Youth and Manhood of Cyril Thornton* (1827), which includes many scenes from the Spanish campaigns, amongst others the investment of Badajoz. Thornton shoots his brother accidentally, passes to Glasgow University (which the author does not spare), gets into some discreditable scrapes, but fights well and loses an arm, and returns home to his true love. The book is a scrambling, lengthy affair, but full of incident and excitement. Soon after, in 1829, appeared *Frank Mildmay*, the first of Marryat's endless yarns, destined and worthy to be read by Thomas Carlyle, and by thousands of schoolboys unto this day.

II

There is no more lively, free-spirited, and precise draughtswoman of certain comic types than Susan Edmonstone Ferrier [1] (1782-1854). She gives, as her friend and admirer Scott observed, a 'portrait of real society'; and her mob of eccentrics and humourists, unsparingly rather than unkindly drawn, actually peopled the old Scottish world that was passing away while she wrote. Her genius was for transcription, though she did not merely put people, as it is called, into a book; and she explains clearly her own method of inventing:

> It has been so often and confidently asserted that all the characters are individual portraits, that the author has little hope of being believed when she asserts the contrary. That *some* of them were sketched from life is not denied, but the circumstances in which they are placed, their birth, habits, language, and a thousand minute particulars, differ so widely from the originals as ought to refute the charge of personality.

Miss Ferrier has a sense of surface absurdities hardly matched amongst women novelists, and though she has little subtlety, and her pure brisk English is without Miss Austen's verbal cunning, she has one point of contact with the greater artist. Both writers love to depict persons who are all surface and gesture, light and null existences, fops and praters, about whom there is no more to say than what they say themselves. Indeed, if Miss Ferrier has a fault, it is that she leaves little unsaid, and that in her pages there are none of the bubbles of still cool irony that rise to the placid surface of *Persuasion*. On another level are her friendlier delineations of humble, queer, and good persons with a twist of oddity, or like the acid old rich man in *Inheritance*, Adam Ramsay, with his bad manners and benevolence. But it must be said that she revels most in moral satire; in exhibiting characters that are hard and sharp, or race-proud and selfish, or vapid and garrulous; and in making us hate them as if we had to live with them. Miss Ferrier, when she is really herself and forgets to repress the natural woman in the interest of didactics, is refreshingly unreticent. She is not an Englishwoman folded away in reserve, but a high-tempered, free-spoken Scottish maiden lady of the old stamp. Her letters to her friend Miss Clavering, with their wild spirits and liberal jokes, must be read if we would duly relish this trait in her character. The delightful

phrase, 'I begin to suspect I 'm with book myself,' could never have issued from Chawton or Edgeworthstown.

It is not hard to see when her genius is at play, and when her sense of duty is at work. To give a cheerful turn to the ending, and to deal out an unlikely measure of poetic justice to the characters, is indeed the perquisite of her school of comedy, and must not be called an inartistic procedure, unless we are also to condemn Ben Jonson and Molière. But Miss Ferrier's own defence of the practice goes far with the doctrine that comedy is the handmaid of morality. It may be quoted for its pointedness of statement, and as giving a clue to her method :

> Now, I don't think, like all penny-book manufacturers, that 'tis absolutely necessary that the good boys and girls should be rewarded, and the naughty ones punished. Yet, I think, where there is much tribulation 'tis fitter it should be the *consequence* rather than the *cause* of misconduct or frailty. You 'll say that rule is absurd, inasmuch as it is not observed in human life ; that I allow, but we know the inflictions of Providence are for wise purposes, therefore our reason willingly submits to them. But as the only good purpose of a book is to inculcate morality, and convey some lesson of instruction as well as delight, I do not see that what is called a *good moral* can de dispensed with in a work of fiction.

The result is a good deal of incidental preaching ; but a more dangerous concession is made by Miss Ferrier to the calls of the 'serious interest.' Her heroines are sometimes patterns of goodness and patience of the official kind ; and she does not shrink from conventional dialogue of an impassioned and high-wrought order, which intrudes amidst the comic realism and is remarkably unreal. Nor are prigs and stock villains wanting ; even Miss Ferrier could not escape from the environment of pseudo-romance and educational fiction. But this price the reader is ready to pay ; none of her three stories are long ; and he glides over these obstructions, soon to return to farce and high comedy and occasional idyll.

Marriage, which was planned in 1810 and appeared in 1818, is a *young* book ; it is the voice of youth revenging itself on the bores whom it will tolerate if only it may describe them ; and though the story is nothing, it is plain that a new painter of Scottish manners has arisen. It rests on that contrast of provincial Scottish humours with modish London life which Miss Ferrier favours. One chapter in it, 'The Story of Mrs. Douglas,' was the work of Miss Clavering, who was a sagacious adviser but not a good writer. To this friend Miss Ferrier explains the scheme of the tale :

I do not recollect ever to have seen the sudden transition of an English beauty, who thinks she can sacrifice all for love, to an uncomfortable solitary Highland dwelling among tall red-haired sisters and grim-faced aunts. . . . The moral to be deduced from that is to warn all young ladies against runaway matches.

This plan is brilliantly carried through; the book was read at once, and the anonymous author suspected; it has held its ground, and must surely do so. But the talk—that, for instance, of the three old aunts, who helped to make the fortune of *Marriage*, sounds like that of voices through a phonograph; reproducing every error and inflexion, but with most of the human quality gone out of it; and, mercilessly, taking as long as the actual talk that is copied. This effect is felt throughout Miss Ferrier's books; it needs a singular talent to produce it.

The Inheritance (1824), a much maturer work, is well and carefully built. The plot and its mystery are sustained. The reader is early allowed to guess, but not to guess quite right, the truth as to the parentage of the Countess of Rossville. She proves to be disentitled to her money and rank; and much pains, even some passion, are spent on portraying her passing weakness and essential nobility of nature; although, it must be granted, the Countess and the pedants surrounding her are lectured overmuch by the authoress herself. The villains and raffish fine gentlemen and chattering dames are of a more ordinary stamp; Miss Pratt is a bore, but redeems herself by the excellent scene where she arrives in a hearse at the doors of her host. *The Inheritance* shows the powers of Miss Ferrier at their fullest, but *Destiny* (1830), except for a certain failure in spirits, is a worthy successor. Here also the heroine is buffeted about amongst vulgarians and fribbles. Great skill is shown in re-creating, with a difference, characters of a type already familiar. Inch Orran is another crabbed old man, like Adam Ramsay but without the kindness, and is triumphantly kept distinct from him. The thick-skinned minister, Mr. M'Dow, with his love of food and money, is a creature of almost Jonsonian breadth and boisterousness; but here the authoress does not escape the charge of iteration, always the bane of the comedy of humours and of the novels of Charles Dickens. The Highland chief, Glenroy, lavish, arrogant, and swathed in vanity, is drawn in the sharpest lines, nor are we spared his dotage. Miss Ferrier indemnifies herself in *Destiny* with the figure of the faithful and lowly confidant, Mrs. Macauley, the most human of all her characters. Of Scott's tolerance Miss Ferrier has nothing, but she does not fail in

kindness and tenderness, and her letters reveal her heart more clearly than her tales. It is not the least of her distinctions that though she lived for nearly a quarter of a century after publishing *Destiny*, she wrote no more. She would not force her vein, and felt that it had been fully explored. None of her three books has sunk in the tide.

III

The record of Irish fiction, which began with Miss Edgeworth, may here be resumed. The novels of Sydney Owenson, afterwards Lady Morgan,[1] who died at a great age in 1859, are but the chief episode in her variegated career. A fervent liberal and patriot, a friend of Thomas Moore, a befriender of Dermody and Maturin, a pleader for Catholic emancipation, a most observant traveller, this versatile and generous-minded if somewhat flighty and emphatic lady won the praises of Byron for her *Italy* and the rancorous hatred of the Tory party for the first of her books on *France* (1817). That pungent and first-hand account of French society and letters in the year after Waterloo, which contains many excellent traits and stories, was assailed as the work of a Jacobin, an infidel, and an ignoramus. Croker, in the *Quarterly*, was the foulest of Lady Morgan's enemies; and she retorted, with a *coup de patte* that drew blood, by caricaturing him in her story *Florence Macarthy*. Lady Morgan has no little innocent vanity in her composition, and often writes too ambitiously, in a flushed, happy-go-lucky style. But she is commendably free from the governess ideal, and has a headlong ardour and vivacity that are wanting to the surer craftsmanship of *Manœuvring* and *The Absentee*. As Miss Owenson, she made her name by *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), a decidedly silly production, with its incredible heroine Glorvina and young-ladyish plot. But even here her aim is apparent; it is to describe and vindicate the Irish people, and especially the Irish poor, as well as the landscape, song, and stories of her country. Her best novels were published after her marriage to Sir Charles Morgan, a Dublin doctor, and their kindly veracity and light-handed skill in delineation more than redeem the flimsy romantic framework.

Of these two may be mentioned, *O'Donnel* (1814) and *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* (1827). The theme of both is the clash of races in Ireland; and the vapid, stony, insolent English fashionables are contrasted on the one hand with the noble, dispossessed O'Brien and O'Donnel, of ancient descent,

the true aristocrats, and on the other with the Paddies and Rories, the sons of the soil, bubbling over with wit and loyal to their old masters. The contrast is not impartial; but it is in her pictures of popular life and her reproduction of Irish talk that Lady Morgan excels. *O'Donnel* was liked by Scott (who reprobated all Lady Morgan's opinions) for the richness of its humorous scenes; but *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*, though it betrays, in its colouring and temper, the influence of the Waverley Novels, is the more original work of the two. As ever, Lady Morgan mingles book-romance with realities. A young collegian, of the stock of the O'Briens, is expelled from Trinity, and joins the Society of United Irishmen; he is also netted in a flirtation, which comes to nothing, with the wife of one of the Castle 'oligarchs.' There is much intrigue, Jesuitry (male and female), and melodrama; a beautiful and mysterious political nun; and there are secret passages, and flitting figures, and traces of the old Radcliffian novel. But the street riot, the race-meeting, the masquerade, the talk of the vacuous dames of quality who beset the hero, and of the old aunts who entertain him, are all presented in the most rapid and lucid style. The book is cumbered by its political purpose; but Lady Morgan's wrath against the penal laws that prevailed in 'Ninety-eight' is never hysterical; her masculine courage in argument and denunciation is unfailing; and she fights, with her own weapons, gallantly enough. She outlived most of her critics, wrote tirelessly to the end, and remained an ever-youthful and honoured veteran in Dublin society.

Scott, in his generous way, had professed his wish to do for Scotland no more than Miss Edgeworth had done for Ireland; the Banims[1] tried to do for Ireland what he had done for Scotland. No one has ever done this; but in the first series of *Tales by the O'Hara Family* (1825) Irish fiction was born anew—a vigorous man-child. The stories of Miss Edgeworth are of a delicate wit and veracity, but we do not expect to find much blood in the veins of her personages. We do not ask her to show the black or the passionate side of the Irish nature, or its more desperate vein of humour, or its faith in the terrors of the night. These things are revealed by the Banims, who also seek to give a real picture of national life, and to embody elements of recent or contemporary history; such, for instance, as the doings of the Whiteboys, who are portrayed with Hogarthian clearness and grimness. No comparison with Scott need be pretended; but, at any rate, the Banims feel

along their nerves some of the things that Scott depicted, as we have seen, rather from without. They catch their breath when they speak of fetches and fairies, and do not regard them as so much literature. The elder brother, Michael Banim (1796-1874), seems to have had a sterner fancy than the younger, John, and wrote the most salient of the first series of the *Tales, Crohoore of the Bill-hook*. He has the gift of rousing and keeping up suspense, though he pulls out the tangle of his plot by a mere piece of melodrama. The story begins with signal skill, fixing an almost indelible suspicion of a dreadful murder upon the wrong man, the red-headed dwarf Crohoore. The scenes in the cave of Dunmore, the vengeance paid out to the tithe-proctor, and the aimless and fruitless chase over bog and valley, are as distinct as anything in *Redgauntlet*. A tale by John Banim in this series, *John Doe*, is confusedly conducted; but the fight at Clonmel fair, and the illicit still among the mountains, are described with the same sharp cutting and savage vivacity. The Banims write in a plain way, without heaviness or ostentation, except when they are led astray by their love of the lurid, or, from time to time, by the snares of rhetoric. *The Smuggler* (1833) is an excursion into English manners, vigorous but over-long. *The Croppy*,[1] and John Banim's *The Nowlans* are also capital tales; and his popular lyric, *Soggarth Aroon* ('dear priest') may be named also. The work of William Carleton (1794-1869) belongs to the next age, though the first series of his *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (1830) was enough to show his superiority over all his forerunners in humour, veracity of pathos, and sombre force.

The Collegians[2] (1829), founded on a true story related by Curran in *The New Monthly Magazine*, and itself the basis of Boucicault's play *The Colleen Bawn*, is a melodrama of the sort that is often hastily described as 'powerful.' The villain, Hardress Cregan, suborns the murder of his humble wife Eily, secretly espoused; is torn by natural emotions of horror before, and remorse after, the event; nearly marries another lady, but is arrested on the eve of the wedding; is convicted on the evidence of his accomplice;—and then the author, Gerald Griffin, 'did not know what to do' with Cregan, who had been visibly shaping, through the narrative, for his ultimate destiny on the vulgar stage. Griffin's brother reports the difficulties:

'*If I hang him*, the public will never forgive me; and yet,' he added playfully in the Irish phrase, 'he deserves hanging as richly

as any young gentleman from this to himself; then if I save his life by some device, or trick, or mercy of the law, any other punishment will seem too light for crimes like his.' He eventually compromised the matter by making him die on his way into perpetual exile, which seems to have satisfied all parties.

Matters so grievous require a merry heart to face them. *The Collegians*, with its diffuse pathos and rhetoric, is at some distance from the methods of the Banims. Though Griffin does not write well, his drinking, hunting, and sailing scenes are lively and expressive enough, and some of his anecdotes in Anglo-Irish are excellent. The tale of Lady Gregory's farce, *The Pot of Broth*, occurs in *The Collegians*. One of the incidents in the real story is better than anything in Griffin's book, and was told by Curran to Lady Morgan. The uncle of the criminal was High Sheriff, and 'his sangfroid and indifference were frightful; he shrugged his shoulders, tucked his napkin under his chin, said it "was a sad business," and called for soup.'

Onwards from the days of the *Minstrelsy*, when he wrote with Leyden the essay on *Fairy Superstitions*, Scott had gathered and saved the folklore of his country; and while his greatest imaginative piece in the vernacular, *Wandering Willie's Tale*, is one of the fruits, the example he set to Ireland is another. Banim and Griffin, like him, inlaid many a legend of fetch and bogle in their stories; but the first true collector was Thomas Crofton Croker (1798-1854). He needed no stimulus from Scotland. His *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, mostly derived from Munster, appeared in 1825; two years later came a second series, and in 1829 *Legends of the Lakes*, afterwards known as *Killarney Legends*. Croker won Scott's delighted admiration, and opened a mine that will not easily give out. His notes and parallels show him to be an accomplished student and antiquary; and he has left a classic record of the religion of the people. The Banshee, the Phooka, the Leprechaun, the Fir Darrig, the Dullahan, and their companions—who cannot remember first meeting them in Croker's pages? To the child they seemed no stranger than many human beings; and soon they ceased to be strange, though they might be alarming or friendly according to their mood; the grimmer ones, it is true, who threw about or pocketed their own heads, being perennially dreadful—because real, like mischievous or deformed persons; you might meet them abroad in the evening, and it was well to know their code. This is the attitude of Croker's informants and of their descend-

ants, and his skill lies in reproducing it without any emphasis or patronage. A man of true humour and fantasy as well as of accurate learning, he is a reporter with an artistic sense, who does best of all when he gets himself out of the way and does not strive after literature. He catches the idiom and rhythm of those who *know*, at second, if not at first hand, the actual facts :

'So my grandfather, like a fool, you see, opened his hand a little, and the little fellow jumped away laughing, and the never the bit of the purse did he get, only the Cluricaune left the little shoe that he was making ; and my grandfather was mad enough angry with himself for letting him go ; but he had the shoe all his life, and my own mother told me she often *see* it, and had it in her hand, and 'twas the prettiest little shoe she ever saw.'

'And did you see it yourself, Molly ? '

'Oh ! no, my dear, it was lost long afore I was born ; but my mother told me about it often and often enough.

The adventures of Daniel O'Rourke, who rode to the moon on the back of an eagle, and held on to the reaping-hook that sticks out of the moon, until the man in the moon sawed it off, are told in the first person by the returned traveller, with even greater liveliness ; and the dialogue is always of the native mint, or, to mend the phrase, of the native still. At other times Croker deals in the ornate romantic style, as in *The Legend of O'Donoghue*, who 'gallops his white charger over the waters of Killarney at early dawn on May morning' ; a style that might not have existed but for the Waverley Novels and their imitators :

The first beams of the rising sun were just gilding the lofty summit of Glenaa, when the waters near the eastern shore of the lake became suddenly and violently agitated, though all the rest of its surface lay smooth and still as a tomb of polished marble ; the next moment a foaming wave darted forward, and, like a proud high-crested war-horse exulting in his strength, rushed across the lake towards Toomie mountain. Behind this wave appeared a stately warrior fully armed, mounted upon a milk-white steed, etc.

The substance of this came from popular narrators, but it has been through a machine ; and many of Croker's tales are in a curious, not disagreeable mixture of the two manners. Sometimes he puts his legend into a conventional ballad ; but his prose, unlike his verse, is hard to forget whatever he may tell in it. The boatman's account of the same hero in *Killarney Legends* is in the more convincing strain :

'You thief, you,' says he, 'don't you know I 'm O'Donoghue? I 'll tache you better manners than to be mistering me; so, for that very word, you must be off in a jig, or may be it would be worse with you. And what are you frightened at, you spalpeen? Won't I mind the cattle till you come back? and won't I lend you my own horse?'

The stories in the *Killarney Legends*, scattered amongst descriptions of scenery and of fishing and hunting, are of the same stamp as those in the *Legends and Traditions*. Croker faithfully chronicles the musical notation of the songs, bugle-calls, and echoes that he hears; and of his own ditties and those of Thomas Moore he is not sparing.

IV

The English novelists, in the nature of the case, have no such unity of aim as distinguishes their Scottish or Irish fellow-craftsmen. Their field is more motley, and they have little of the zest of the explorers in countries undescribed. One authoress however, Mary Russell Mitford[1] (1787-1855), in her narrow but flowery square of ground rivals in delicacy and excels in charm the recorders of village manners in Ireland or Scotland. This lady's *Recollections of a Literary Life* (1852) are an unconscious revelation of her vivacity and charity. Long in devoted attendance on a muddling and selfish father, she tried several modes of living by her pen before she found her subject. She first wrote verses, which would not serve. She then turned to poetical tragedy, and her *Julian*, *Foscari*, and *Rienzi* were performed with considerable success. In the intervals of their production (1823-8), Miss Mitford began to collect the sketches and stories which gave her fame.

In the three series of *Our Village* (1824-32), Miss Mitford humanised the tradition of intimate, feminine prose; she is a kinder spirit than the women novelists, and has the poetic sense besides. She describes simple things that she has seen and liked: her dog Mayflower, a spring coppice, the pleasures of 'violeting,' or an old house, or a rural street; and, above all, the people in the village, the cottager, the 'farmeress,' the constable, the servant-girl, the poacher, and the local cricketer, whose death is described with whimsical pathos, as Burns celebrates that of Tam Samson; or, again, her favourite books and authors, Cowper, Gilbert White, *The Tempest*—an odd assortment. *Our Village* is full of light, flying literary allusions. Miss Mitford was a great reader, and her letters

abound in remarks, sharply enough dashed off, on contemporary poetry and fiction, on Lady Morgan, and *Melmoth*, and the Scotch novels. She likes gentle and unpretentious writing, but is by no means deaf to romance. Her *Early Recollections*, which occur in *Our Village*, suggest the similar writing of Mary Lamb; less haunting in sentiment and language, they have the same sort of nice fidelity and carefulness. Everything is rapid, and usually the tone is buoyant; there is no prosing; Miss Mitford is actually full of the 'vital feelings of delight' that quicken Wordsworth's girls and women, and of the 'intense feeling of existence,' as she calls it, that comes over her on the 'first mild day in March.' The spring she finds always incredible, which it is. She is fond of ordinary, pleasant, and lovely objects. She muses aloud, and speaks of her 'murmuring cogitations.' She coins quaint words, like 'betweenity' or 'pastoralities,' or uses local ones, such as 'pightles' and 'deedily' (which means ploddingly, as she explains, referring to Miss Austen as a precedent). Not a page of her sketches could have been written by a man, and this is her merit. She gives the impression of her sex better than many more passionate women; her laughter is feminine too, and saves her from the risks of effusion and exaggeration, the bane of professed scene-painters and describers. Her *Country Stories* (1837) have the same kind of grace, with its gentle touches of pathos, though the stories are nothing.

It is piquant to turn from these quiet English water-colours to the big 'subject-pictures' of exotic adventure—from Three-Mile Cross, near Reading, to the masculine pictures of bazaars and harems.

A striking novel of Eastern manners, Thomas Hope's *Anastasius, or Memoirs of a Greek, written at the Close of the Eighteenth Century*, appeared in 1819. Beckford, who never left Europe, had caught from books and his own temperament the true strain of fantasy; Hope, another rich man and connoisseur of art, travelled at leisure through the East in his youth, and knows and describes it from within with a veracity that piqued Byron. His book is but lightly coloured by Byronism, and its link with the fiction of terror and villainy is most superficial. A villain his Anastasius is, with a leaning to rhetoric, but still a creation of quite another order from the heroes of Mrs. Radcliffe or Maturin. This rascally picaroon, throughout his wanderings, never utterly forfeits our sympathy, although he deserts and kills, only half by chance, his sworn blood-brother, is the death of two or three trusting women,

turns Moslem for sheer policy, robs, lies, squanders, and rakes incorrigibly. He has to undergo every shift of fortune; fights in the Turkish army bravely, commander of the Arnaoots, serves a treacherous Bey in Egypt, scours the Levant and Mediterranean, makes his pilgrimage to Mecca, and oscillates between ill-gotten wealth and well-earned penury. At last, broken at thirty-five and dying, he dictates his memoirs in a hovel in Carinthia, full of dejection and remorse. The book is thus in form an autobiography, and Anastasius, at the last, suffers enough to retrieve our compassion, and his self-analysis is merciless. In his love-passage with the luckless Euphrosyne, in his search for their child Alexis, whom he saves and then loses, and in his revisitings of his old home, there is real pathos. The book is weighted by long stretches of historical description and by some prolixity of sentiment, but its irony and vividness, and its nice portraiture of Oriental ceremony, intrigue, bloodshed, and motive, have often been attested. Hope's works on costume and architecture were of antiquarian value in their day, and his designs for furniture are described as having affected, if not much for the better, the taste of the time. He further wrote a curious and unorthodox disquisition on *The Origin and Prospects of Man.*

A subtler story of Oriental life, *The Adventures of Hajjî Baba of Ispahan*[1] (1824), by the traveller and diplomatist, James Justinian Morier, has, unlike *Anastasius*, met its deserts, and is as fresh as if written yesterday. It contains no melodrama to antiquate it, and though long is rapid, never prolix; its humorous savour is delicate, sometimes profound, and omnipresent. Modern authorities have spoken to Morier's knowledge of Persia, and to his observation and intuition of the national character, derived from a stay comparatively short. In his *Journeys*, published in 1812 and 1818, appears his solid acquaintance with the geography, customs, and externals of the country; while the gleams of humour in his description of the court and dignitaries prepare us a little for the surprising pictures of *Hajjî Baba.* The tale is told in the first person by the Hajjî, or pilgrim, who assumes the title on the strength of a pre-natal voyage to Mecca, beginning even thus early his career of impudence. He is yet another vagrant adventurer, and the tale has no other clue except that 'identity of the hero' which Aristotle found to be insufficient for an epic, but which serves inevitably for this class of story. Hajjî becomes barber, tobacco-seller, dervish, executioner, pipe-vendor, and State emissary in turn. He is a dauntless braggart and a ready

coward, an accomplished mime and tale-teller, a humorous rogue whose twinges of remorse are grotesquely brief and inadequate, and a ruthless self-critic whose self-esteem instantly bubbles up again. He is shameless, not in any Arabian Nights, irresponsible world, but in the real world, which we see entirely through his eyes; and yet we do not hate him. Only once is the colouring tragic, and then it is dreadful. This is in the episode of the beautiful Zeenab, his mistress, who, being found unworthy of the Shah's attentions, is gruesomely done to death, Hajjî being forced to look on wearing his garb as assistant executioner, but powerless to interfere. His spasm of grief soon passes, and he steps out again, almost merrily. Morier wrought into his book many actual persons and episodes; but, without being told, we should trace no seam between history and invention. His English, while easy and familiar, is noticeably pure; and his natural way of interweaving Eastern hyperbole, proverb, and poetic allusion with his dialogue is the admiration of those able to judge. In another story, *Zohrab the Hostage* (1832), the same gifts are seen, although the set forms and high style of the historic novel are somewhat intrusive. And in *Ayesha, the Maid of Kars* (1834), despite its cheap romantic plot, Morier shows that he has nerve for other work than the comedy of manners. But here too the spirit of *Hajjî Baba* reappears; and there is the high relish of farce in the episode where the pasha is puzzled by the 'leather pantaloons' of the English lord, and converts them first into a headgear and next into a wineskin. There is a certain gleeful appreciation in Morier of his tortuous rascally heroes, united with a sharp undeceivable perception of them, that makes these tales un-English in spirit; there is no contempt or declamation, but a close following of the Persian temper, mobile, rudderless, and not ill-natured, in all its windings and scenic manifestations. In another work, a sequel, *The Adventures of Hajjî Baba of Ispahan in England*, he turns his satire, by the time-honoured device familiar in Goldsmith and others, upon his own country: which is seen through the surprised open eyes of the Hajjî, himself born under quite different conventions of roguery. The satire, however, is double-edged; neither side escapes; and the reception at court, the wooing by the Hajjî (supposed a prince) of Miss Bessy Hogg, the curiosity of the English ladies over the Circassian slave, and the return to Persia, are all in the best style of impartial comedy. A few of the traits are drawn from experience, as Morier explains, and are recorded in his Second

Journey. There is, however, hardly the easy and profound humour that distinguishes *Hajjî Baba in Ispahan* from all other Eastern narratives by Englishmen.

One shapeless, violent, pungent story belongs to an earlier generation than that of its earliest readers. *Adventures of a Younger Son*[1] (1831), by Edward John Trelawny, the adorer of Shelley and the companion of Byron, makes the work of all the sedentary romancers seem unreal. It is not a novel; and, as Trelawny wrote, 'my life is not a novel'; it is a mixture of autobiography, wild fiction, and highly-spiced reading; of sea knowledge, Smollettesque realism, and undisciplined poetry—poetic ore unsmelted. The freebooting, man-sticking hero, whose character is not spared, passes a wretched childhood at home and at school, which leaves him callous and dauntless, but generous and capable of passion; and falls in with a superior spirit, admirably drawn, one De Ruyter, who spends his days in a piratical vendetta against the English nation and the East India Company. Under his tutelage the Younger Son sails Malayan and South Sea waters, on endless bloody ventures; marries Zela, a little Madagascar girl, who shares his perils and saves his life, and loses her at last in a dreadful manner—(this is all brain-spun exotic stuff)—and at last drifts home a kind of wreck, though in years almost a boy. The tone is often Byronic; but it is the Byron of *Mazeppa* and *Juan*, not of *Childe Harold* and *Lara*. There is the same abrupt oscillation between realism and romance, one chapter resembling a prose counterpart of the shipwreck in *Don Juan*, and another being founded on *The Island*. Trelawny, like Byron, was versed in the original records of such incidents by Bligh and Mariner. There is also plenty of Byronic pose and personal swagger, but the line between these things and sincerity is hard to trace, and the final impression is one of bitter truthfulness. The very chapter-mottoes are taken from Byron, or else from Shelley and Keats, unfailingly. The 'horrific stories' which Mrs. Shelley reports Trelawny as loving to recite are here in plenty, and require some strength of stomach in the reader; but they were honestly relished by the author, and his emphasis is natural and ingrained. But for a certain monotony in the sea-robberies and hair-breadth escapes, the book is unflagging in its pace and vigour; and its idyllic and descriptive pages, if somewhat made-up in the style of the school, are beautiful nevertheless. It is the work of a man, if not exactly of an artist.

V

After the tension of romance, and doctrine, and controversy, comes the wit and satirist, and it is pleasant to see all these things held up to us in his mirror—which, like Aristotle's comic mask, 'perverts without giving pain.' The tales and imaginary conversations of Thomas Love Peacock[1] (1785-1866), the friend of Shelley, are part of the comment of the 'romantic period' upon itself; we cannot fully understand it without them. In some ways he is like Samuel Butler, who also plays about the affectations of the time and derides them in the name of reason and good sense. Butler jests against the Royal Society, and Peacock against the 'march of mind,' achieved through Mechanics' Institutes and by the labours of Lord Brougham. Butler mocks at astrologers, Peacock at vegetarians and other craze-mongers. Logic, essence, quiddity, and all the terms of the schools, are rhymed to death by the first; the dialect of the 'transcendental metaphysician, who has pure unanticipated cognitions of everything,' is mimicked by the second. The likeness hardly goes further, for Butler is at bottom serious and rather savage, and his wit and fireworks easily fatigue us; Peacock, whilst unsparing, is full of *bonhomie* and Attic scholarship, with a ruling sense for scale and finish, and fears to go on too long. He himself is also, if not an eccentric, what is called a 'character,' as his letters to Shelley and his writings show. His professional existence as a public servant and an early promoter of the steamship traffic in the East does not concern us. He is full of good crusted scholarship, ready with his Greek quotations, and fond of the poets, like Nonnus, of the decadence; and it would be easy to find in him a streak of Lucian.

Except for his songs and ditties, Peacock's verse is rather curious and representative than good. He passed through a stage of admiration for Erasmus Darwin and the rhetorical parts of Campbell, as through a kind of measles, and imitated the latter poet in his *Philosophy of Melancholy* (1812). His *Ahrimanes*, of uncertain date, has noticeable analogies with *Alastor*, but may be earlier in composition; in any case, its employment of Spenser's measure is more like Byron's, and the general ring is suggestive of Dryden:

> No, far remote, in orient clouds unfurled,
> No prayer, no sacrificial rite he heeds;
> His reign is past; his rival rules the world;
> From Ahrimanes now all power proceeds;
> For him the altar burns; for him the victim bleeds.

Peacock's *Genius of the Thames* (1810) and *Palmyra* (1806) are of the prize poem order, and in that order excellent; his *Rhododaphne* (1818) is much more mature, and full of smooth happy turns; but his prose and letters, written at the same date, are far more his own, and like many good prose writers he is apt to keep his more imitative, factitious self for his serious ambitious verse. *Calidore*, *The Lady of the Hill*, and other prose pieces show his romantic fancy, only occasionally crossed by the spirit of satire; and lyrics like 'Beneath the cypress shade' and 'Al mio primiero amore,' reveal the delicate and tender sentiment which the satirist, above all men, is shy of publishing. But the songs scattered in Peacock's novels, mostly jovial and mocking, sometimes grave, best of all when the two moods are blended but the satire dominant, unite a flawless finish with the expression of the rollicking or pensive passion of the moment, incomparably well. Not only the famed *War-song of Dinas Vawr*, and the ditty on the red nose, but a dozen others achieve this union.

The art of satire in the hands of Peacock, like that of rhetoric in the estimation of Plato, resolves itself into a kind of cookery; almost, indeed, into the concoction of a single dish, with much the same ingredients, which the *chef* spends fifteen years in garnishing and making perfect; which is named after him and copied by others, but of which the open secret dies with him. The fifteen years begin with *Headlong Hall* (1816) and end with *Crotchet Castle* (1831). Between came *Melincourt* (1817) and *Nightmare Abbey* (1818); and, as late as 1860, *Gryll Grange*, in which the veteran returns to the charge, wonderfully lively, if with the gaiety of his prejudice a trifle hardened. All these works are on the same loose plan; but amidst them come two novels rightly so called, *Maid Marian* (1822) and *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829), of which the form is at once closer to romance and a delicate travesty of it, while the satire that suffuses them is of a rarer and less combative sort. Otherwise, Peacock's fictions are not novels at all; the conversation is everything; and an excuse is found for it by a show of a story, sown with descriptions and light episodes. The framework is the same throughout; a band of humourists, in the old sense of the term, are gathered in a hospitable country house and talk at one another; and the style is the same, except that it gets better and better up to *Crotchet Castle*, being, as one critic well says, 'rather engraved than written.' It is this firm and classic quality that distinguishes the wit of Peacock from that of his debtor

and son-in-law, George Meredith. The companies that dine, and snap, and toss the shuttle of debate in *Richard Feverel* or *The Egoist*, have been accused of unnaturalness; but they really, with their hit-or-miss manner of repartee, give more the sense of actual excited talk than Peacock's personages. Meredith's make many wonderful strokes and dozens of false ones, but are so heady and high-spirited that they carry the game through and disarm criticism. Peacock, we feel, has scored out every word which he feels will not ring as sharply fifty years afterwards. Yet he does not write, like Sheridan, up to a prepared joke; he does not seem to know himself what is coming; there is the true air of *impromptu*, only no misses are allowed. This quality is present not only in the dialogue but the stage directions, even when they come nearest to the farcical; but it is Attic farce, and ages well:

> But when Marionetta hinted that she was to leave the Abbey immediately, Scythrop snatched from its repositary his ancestor's skull, filled it with Madeira, and presenting himself before Mr. Glowry, threatened to drink off the contents if Mr. Glowry did not immediately promise that Marionetta should not be taken from the Abbey without her own consent. Mr. Glowry, who took the Madeira to be some deadly brewage, gave the required promise in dismal panic. Scythrop returned to Marionetta with a joyful heart, and drank the Madeira by the way.

Scythrop, with his gloom and his tendency to mess with chemicals, is in part a travesty of the youthful Shelley, the Shelley of *St. Irvyne*; but we soon cease to recognise the poet in him, for he is a pure 'humourist,' like most of Peacock's characters. Every one has an idiosyncrasy or spring; when it is touched, he explodes, and the talk is a series of such explosions, generated by the mutual contact of the humourists. There is no action, only the endless reciprocal exposure of individual manias. But the tone is not, as in Jonson's *Alchemist*, that of the learned, boisterous, flagellant moralist; it is more that of *Every Man in his Humour*, except that in Peacock there is no action. Nor has he many preferences; he keeps aloof from his puppets, good-natured and merciless, with a saving kindness for the gay natural young women who pass unspoilt through the noise of his menagerie and keep a free mind. In *Melincourt* one of these ladies is herself the hostess of a swarm of fortune-hunters and monomaniacs; she finds her mate in a Mr. Forester, a somewhat *exalté* but simple and honest follower of Rousseau and the natural life.

Peacock's way is to keep certain leading characters in stock,

and to elaborate them in successive tales. There must be a host to pass the decanter and intervene when the voluble, rook-like chorus becomes too shrill. Such is Harry Headlong, the sporting Welsh squire who, wishing 'to be thought a philosopher and a man of taste,' goes to Oxford to seek for a house-party of men of taste and philosophers. Such too is the rich Mr. Ebenezer MacCrotchet, of mixed Hebrew and Scottish parentage, who 'signed himself E. M. Crotchet, which by degrees induced the majority of his neighbours to think that his name was Edward Matthew.' He too, such is his ancestral passion for arguing and hearing argue, asks down 'a numerous detachment from the advanced guard of the "march of intellect."' And amongst the visitors, when they come; amongst the crowd of pure fantastics—two-dimensional figures, or gesticulating shadows, as they may be called—amongst them is commonly found some more solid and substantial man, the centre of the talk, and a divine full of gastronomy and Greek; a type sketched in the mere Dr. Gaster of *Headlong Hall*, revived after nearly half a century in the Dr. Opimian of *Gryll Grange*, and perfected meanwhile in the Rev. Dr. Folliott of *Crotchet Castle*. This is Peacock's most living, Fielding-like creation, inspired by the nameless muse of humane wit (who is herself a tenth sister of the hackneyed nine, and in countenance unlike gentle Thalia). Dr. Folliott is learned, brave, and quick in knock-down blows and retorts, and a worthy progenitor of Meredith's Dr. Middleton. The classic chapter on 'The Sleeping Venus,' where he remonstrates with Mr. Crotchet upon his studyful of casts, is not unlike the best mischievous writing of Goldsmith.

Fully to relish Peacock, it is well to be able to recognise, under various thin disguises, the caricatured figures of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Southey, Malthus, and Brougham, and other Edinburgh Reviewers. Justice is not to be wished for; Peacock's unfairness is more pleasing to watch. In his eyes Southey is a mere renegade, a Mr. Feathernest; Byron, as Mr. Cypress, talks in a patchwork of pessimistic phrases from *Childe Harold*; Coleridge seems to be sitter for the portrait of Mr. Panscope, the universal viewer, in *Headlong Hall*, and for the more finished one of Mr. Flosky, or the 'lover of shadows' in *Nightmare Abbey*, who has christened his eldest son Emmanuel Kant Flosky. His rigmarole, when Marionetta questions him as to the melancholy of her cousin Scythrop, is of the best quality:

Marionetta.—Do you, or do you not, know what is the matter with my cousin ?

Mr. Flosky.—To say that I do not know, would be to say that I am ignorant of something ; and God forbid, that a transcendental metaphysician, who has pure anticipated cognitions of everything, and carries the whole science of geometry in his head without ever having looked into Euclid, should fall into so empirical an error as to declare himself ignorant of anything. To say that I do know, would be to pretend to positive and circumstantial knowledge touching present matter of fact. . . .

In all this Peacock seldom shows his own hand : when he does so, it is a simple one. Many of the things he dislikes are plain enough : hazy, morbid romance, the mechanical sort of political economy, the ' march of science ' in its popular applications, and cheap radicalism of all sorts, as well as the besotted toryism of Seithenyn in *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, when he reasons concerning the leaky embankment :

It is well ; it works well ; let well alone. Cupbearer, fill. It was half rotten when I was born, and that is a conclusive reason why it should be three parts rotten when I die.

Peacock's preferences are less often disclosed ; but good song, good Greek, good sense and good wine, are certainly amongst them. His kindness for romance is best seen in his mockery of it, and also in his love of ending a tale with the cheerful marriage of his favourites.

Melincourt is his longest book, and the fullest, even to the point of tedium, of elaborate crazy monologues. But we are long kept alert by that noble farcical creation, Sir Oran Haut-Ton, and by the expectation of what he will next do ;—not *say*, for through the two volumes he never speaks. Nor is this silence unnatural, for Sir Oran has walked straight out of Lord Monboddo's *Antient Metaphysics* (1779-99), a true pioneer-work in anthropology, but one that lent itself to a popular derision more vulgar than Peacock's. Sir Oran's prototype, the tamable, benevolent, accomplished, and yet mute orang-outang, had been cited by Lord Monboddo as a true ' missing link,' or rather as undeveloped man. Sir Oran has been caught, and taught, and dressed, and whilst of a peculiar cast of countenance, has received by nature, and perfected by practice, a most distinguished bearing. He rescues damsels, punishes ruffians, takes his wine, and at last sits for the borough of Onevote. The satire here has several edges, for Sir Oran has the advantage of most of the specimens

of mankind with whom he is brought in contact. His silence is a foil to the eloquence of Mr. Fax, who is a travesty of Malthus, and to the humours of Sir Humphrey Hippy, of Hypocon House, who is troubled with the spleen. But the plan of *Melincourt* straggles and vanishes as the appearances of Sir Oran become fewer.

In Mr. Chainmail, the mediævalist, Peacock banters the ages of romance; but he is not their enemy, and, without knowing much about them, he wishes to see them as they were, without the wrong sort of glamour; and in *Maid Marian* and *Elphin* he tries thus to exhibit them. He has the true love for wild scenery, especially for that of Wales, which he knew well, and also for the English greenwood; though he does not take this or any passion too seriously, it rather is that of the scholar than the lover. He mocks the persons who try to see, or to lay out nature 'picturesquely,' after the manner of Gilpin and Mr. Forester; but he likes to look at a waterfall, and to imagine a sleeping nymph balanced over it on a projecting bough. In all this, and his tendency to pull himself up when he is admiring too much, he seems to stand between the two centuries. He was not the friend of Shelley for nothing; but then at times he is also *anima Voltairii, habitans in poculo*—not, indeed, *in sicco*. In him the age of reason—of reason with a difference—is once more seen commenting on itself and on its successor.

Maid Marian,[1] which he calls a 'comic romance of the twelfth century,' is really a gay, boisterous yet delicate, self-deriding kind of idyll, full of song and hard knocks; a picture of the golden world of the Robin Hood ballads that Percy and Ritson had revealed. It preceded *Ivanhoe* by more than a year in composition, except for three of its chapters; otherwise it might have seemed an attempt to describe the same scenes without the heavy elements—the history, melodrama, and pageantry. But it is not an historical novel in any sense; the ballads, and perhaps the pleasant Elizabethan comedy *Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, and the old romance of *Cœur-de-Lion*, are its sufficient inspiration. Maid Marian, a late and not the best creation of the ballad-muse, is improved and glorified. She is here a brave Norman lady, Matilda Fitzwater, who chafes at life in a baronial castle, joins the outlaw band, is a famous archer, holds the disguised King Richard at point with her sword, and weds Young Gamwell, another ballad-hero. Friar Tuck is present also; he is not the holy and solid Clerk of Copmanhurst, but he is the singer of Peacock's most

charming and effortless snatches. The chivalrous robber-code of the best Robin Hood poems is exactly reproduced —more lightly, indeed, than it is by Scott ; and the incident of the poor knight who took Our Lady for surety, and whose debt to Robin Hood was paid unwillingly by the Church, is used to the full.

The Misfortunes of Elphin is another of Peacock's strange salads of romance and song and satire ; he uses his satire to take off any mawkishness from his romance, and his lyric power to make the note of beauty and strangeness predominates after all. He knew some Welsh, used old legendary ditties freely as a basis for his own, and broke new ground in trying to re-create the atmosphere of mythic Wales and the world of Arthur. He wrote some years before Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion* appeared, but it is partly ascertained from what ancient sagas and poems he drew. He melts together the stories of Elphin and of the bard Taliesin, who becomes the hero as the book proceeds. There is noble Rabelaisian comedy in the figure of Seithenyn, one of the ' three immortal drunkards of Britain,' who becomes, as already noted, a conservative reasoner much more amusing than Sydney Smith's Mr. Noodle, falls into the flood caused by the breach in the famous embankment, saves himself, however, by clinging to two barrels—emptied, providentially, by his own act ; and ends as King Arthur's second butler. There is a somewhat serious rhetorical contrast of the middle with the modern age, put into the mouth of Taliesin ; but the scholar's imaginary reconstruction of Caerleon upon Usk in its ancient splendour is nearer to the mediæval spirit than anything we find in Scott himself. There is also a bardic competition, which gives occasion for a posy of admirable songs, often closely imitated from the original Welsh. Peacock's prose is also seen to advantage in his reviews and criticisms. His *Four Ages of Poetry* is paradoxical, and is rather dimmed by Shelley's masterpiece, which it provoked. But his comments on the poetry of Nonnus, his exposure of the scanty scholarship of Moore's *Epicurean*, and his severe article upon Moore's *Life of Byron*, are visibly from the pen of the author of *Crotchet Castle*. His chronicle and description of Shelley show his observant affection, rooted in a humorous sense of the contrast between himself and his friend. Of his little plays lately rescued, *The Dilettanti* is nearest in spirit to his novels.

CHAPTER XIII

THE OFFICIAL REVIEWERS

I. Growth of the periodical press after 1800; effect on the art of prose; conception of the 'article.' Existing organs. Foundation and aims of the *Edinburgh Review*. New characteristics. Jeffrey as a critic; his method, limitations, attitude to imaginative work. His style and manner; *jeux d'esprit* by Thomas Moore and Copleston.

II. Brougham, his fertility, oratorical method, form. Sydney Smith: as reviewer, and as pamphleteer and fighter; mental temper; Whig temper as reformer; attitude to religion. His wit, its character; his style of portraiture.

III. The *Quarterly Review*: foundation and staff; Gifford, Croker, Barrow, Scott, Southey, Lockhart. Traits of the two great quarterlies; their representative character and bias; unsigned articles; editorial autocracy.

IV. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; anti-Whiggery; creative aims, and humour. John Wilson ('Christopher North'): his poems and tales; *Noctes Ambrosianæ*; criticisms.

V. John Gibson Lockhart: his career; *Peter's Letters*; early pranks; tales (*Adam Blair*, *Valerius*, *Reginald Dalton*, *Matthew Wald*); verses, *Ancient Spanish Ballads*; *Life of Scott*, its excellences. William Maginn: his verses, skits, sketches, and essays.

VI. Some other journals; the *London Magazine*, etc. Increasing volume of the periodical press. Ugo Foscolo and Italian literature. Study of older English and of foreign writers: the *Retrospective Review*.

I

The swift expansion of the periodical press after 1800[1] established a new relationship between men of letters and the public, and moulded the art of prose more than any other external influence. Few but the great magazines, which have kept or will soon keep their centenaries, can here be mentioned. Amongst the men of letters that served them, the founders, controllers, and staff officers can be distinguished, not too accurately, from the critics and essayists who simply contributed. Wilson, Gifford, Lockhart, and Jeffrey are in the former class, while Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey fall into the second. But with all of them the result is similar; the *article*, whether long or short, as distinct from the book or treatise, becomes the unit of composition. The old periodical essay is taken up and transformed; its types and varieties are enlarged. The *Essays of Elia*, Hazlitt's reviews, the

Confessions of an Opium-eater, the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, the studies of Macaulay, were all at first articles. Their length, or the length of their serial chapters, is determined by the average reader's power of attention for a single sitting, and by the competing lure of other articles in the same issue. The new prose itself, so various, so coloured, so ductile, takes its impress from the conditions, economic and social, that are newly developed. De Quincey turns into a professional *polyhistor*, or omniscient writer of all work; Coleridge into a political journalist on a newspaper; Southey, Scott, Lockhart, and many more become too frequently reviewing machines. The system of communication between writer and reader is revolutionised; we can compare the invention of the telephone; and in the eighteenth century there was nothing of the kind.

The reviews, indeed, and magazines already existing in 1800 are past numbering here. The oldest, the *Monthly Review*, was Whiggish in tendency, with a Nonconformist colouring; it was founded in 1749, and continued, with intervals, until as late as 1845. The Tories had the *Critical Review*, which began in 1756, and lasted until 1817, the birth-year of *Blackwood's*. The High Churchmen had the *British Critic* (1793-1843), the Evangelicals the *Christian Observer* (1802-1857). Of the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797-98) enough has been said; it is almost the only journal of the time in which we are sure to find wit and talent, and it lived eight months. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, on the other hand, survived through many vicissitudes, and lasted, keeping not a little of its early scope, for more than a century and a half (1731-1868). It was full of antiquarian and literary lore, and kept something of the tone of scholarship, and, especially in the later years of the century, contained not a little good prose and verse. But it was not an organ; and, like its fellow-journals, it had no real claim, or pretence, to mould opinion. Indeed, these ancient tomes are daunting even to the most stubborn reader; the *Literary*, the *Critical*, the *British*, where are they? The early *Edinburghs* and *Quarterlies* are themselves all too spectral; and what of these wraiths vanishing in their rear? It is true that genuine men of letters, like Smollett, Johnson, or Cowper, are found contributing to them; but, in general, their contents were menial work, ill-paid, partisan, uncritical, and in form seldom presentable.

The origins of the *Edinburgh Review* have often been told.

'The *Review*, in short, has but two legs to stand on. Literature, no doubt, is one of them: but its *Right leg* is Politics.'

This remark of Jeffrey's to Scott, who wished the *Review* to stand chiefly upon literature and broke with it when its Whiggism became too distinct, expresses the temper of the founders. In their view it was created to save the nation, and the principles of 1688, from the Tory reaction, in 1802 at its height; under the conviction that otherwise the nation would recoil to the perilous principles of 1789, which were only scotched, not killed. Therein lay 'the vast importance, the high and difficult duty, of a middle party,' which should rally the moderate reformers, the stable, cultivated classes, the Liberal members of the great houses, the practical and steadily-moving philanthropists, and the believers in a popular control exercised under a constitutional machinery now long prescriptive. It was seen, indeed, that the world had moved since 1688, and political theory along with it. The 'lessons' of the French Revolution and its sequel were to be taken to heart. Tyranny was for ever discredited, and kings, as 'officers in trust,' were to be so fenced by popular rights and parliamentary procedure as to remain at once protected, harmless, and beneficent institutions. Fifteen years after the *Review* began, the same moral was proclaimed upon the fall of Napoleon, when Jeffrey hoped that a new era had opened; a forecast soon enough to be made foolish. The Whig programme need not be detailed here, nor the list of championed causes to which, within a quarter of a century, the reviewers could point with pride: Catholic emancipation, reform of prisons, a measure of justice to Ireland, popular education.[1] They fought hard with the pen for these things, though most of their writing in this field is clear-cut, lucid, efficient journalism and not literature. The power they acquired, and the fear and dissatisfaction they awakened on both sides, can be measured, within the sphere of journalism itself, by some other great foundations. The *Quarterly Review*, in 1809, was established by the revolting and equally resolute and dogmatic Tories; *Blackwood's* in 1817, by Tories of a younger and nimbler cast; and the *Westminster Review* in 1824, by the Radical offspring of Benthamism, who treated the great, belated, compromising 'middle party' as obstacles to social and legal reform and to intellectual light. Meantime the Whig writers had their day, and the *Review* an influence that has seldom been won by any periodical in the world. It has its place in every political history of England, and in two ways with all its shortcomings it set journalism on a permanently higher level. It had its principles, whatever their

value, which were impersonal, and to which it held fast. This cannot be said of the periodical writing of Defoe, Swift, and Bolingbroke, the three masters of such writing a century before; although each of the three was a greater man of letters than most writers on the *Review*. For secondly, it was disciplined, and concerted, and manned by persons of diverse talents; and it had a vast body of social and civic opinion behind it, which it partly expressed and partly created. It was, moreover, independent; in the hands of no parliamentary gang, no bookseller, and of no capitalist. At the same time it was well-to-do, and could and did begin by taking risks, and paid its contributors on a scale hitherto unknown. The same remarks apply to the *Quarterly*, which spoke, with equal weight, for the opposite school of opinion. These powers and advantages were not evident all at once. The Edinburgh Reviewers started with a light heart, and only after a little discovered their strength. Yet few now read their old articles, at any rate before the arrival of Macaulay in 1825, except professed students.

Till that date, literature in the *Edinburgh Review* is chiefly in the hands of Francis Jeffrey,[1] who was its editor almost from the first and until 1829. This once-noted despot of letters wrote some two hundred articles,[2] mostly reviews of books. They are chiefly on poetry, drama, fiction, biography, memoirs, and travels, but they also range over law, politics, and speculation. Jeffrey could write about anything, just as he would take any case in the courts. In all he says we seem to hear 'some conclusive little cut his tongue was giving,' as noted by Carlyle in the *Reminiscences*. It was, indeed, in the intervals of his busy, darting existence as a supremely successful advocate and a highly regarded judge, that he wrote his articles. In 1844 he republished one hundred of them; since 1853 few have been printed again. The contrast with the Ishmaelite Hazlitt, who had scant authority in his own day, comes home to us. Hazlitt must increase, and Jeffrey must decrease, and this is only as it ought to be. Genius has its revenges in the long run upon sharp-witted, many-sided competence. But the subsidence of Jeffrey's fame, though not to be prevented, has led to historical injustice, and also to critical error, in spite of judicious protests.[3] He is not merely a representative figure; he is a curious, complex personage, not easy to measure in spite of his lucidity. As a man he lives in the pages of Carlyle and Lockhart; but his mind and artistic tastes these observers hardly reveal.

Many people only know how Jeffrey said that *The Excursion*

would not do, that the end of the *Ode to Duty* is utterly without meaning, and that the *Immortality Ode* is illegible and unintelligible; that he ignored Shelley,[1] and made much of Rogers; and yet that for a quarter of a century he was popularly taken as a high court of appeal in letters. His own retrospect,[2] written in 1829, of that period tells us more about Jeffrey as a critic than anything else, both in its mixed blindness and foresight, and its cool, qualified pessimism. He muses not without pathos:

> Since the beginning of our critical career we have seen a vast deal of beautiful poetry pass into oblivion, in spite of our feeble efforts to recall or retain it in remembrance. The tuneful quartos of Southey are already little better than lumber:—and the rich melodies of Keats and Shelley,—and the fantastical emphasis of Wordsworth,—and the plebeian pathos of Crabbe,—are melting fast from the field of our vision. The novels of Scott have put out his poetry. Even the splendid strains of Moore are fading into distance and dimness, except where they have been married to immortal music; and the blazing star of Byron himself is receding from its place of pride. We need say nothing of Milman, and Croly, and Atherstone, and Hood, and a legion of others, who, with no ordinary gifts of taste and fancy, have not so properly survived their fame, as been excluded, by some hard fatality, from what seemed their just inheritance. The two who have the longest withstood this rapid withering of the laurel, and with the least marks of decay on their branches, are Rogers and Campbell . . .

—who, he adds, live by their taste and elegance: titles which, if they ensure fame at all, will surely bring it, in his opinion, to Felicia Hemans. No one will say this passage is meanly written; there is a plangency about it and a rolling eloquence of which we are nowadays afraid. It is the epitaph inscribed by the chief official critic of that age upon the poetry of the age. Jeffrey clearly thinks that all these writers are dead beyond recovery; he has no faith in the judgment of *orbis terrarum*; and his epithets show, in most instances, where he thinks their fate is merited. As to the fact, he is half right; some of these reputations did seem in 1829 to be eclipsed, or rather 'melting'—for Tennyson had not risen to eclipse them; 1829 was the hour to try men's faith in poetry—the 'dead point' in the turn of the wheel. Southey (not to name 'Croly and Atherstone') was really, as a poet, extinct, and has remained so; Byron was really 'receding,' in England at least, and has continued to recede. Crabbe was long out of fashion, but his name is reviving. There is no need to comment on

Jeffrey's view of Shelley, with whom he never reckoned, or of Keats, whom, as some will be surprised to learn, he had praised[1] with delighted generosity, and, if not very profoundly, still for the right reasons. Crabbe had always been his favourite, for reasons suggested already; and his brief summaries of Crabbe's stories show his style, quick, living, limpid, at its very best. To Scott's verse he had also done honour, though without seeing the greatness of his lyrics. Southey he had treated very seriously, and also *Lalla Rookh*.

His tone about Byron is that of deploring admiration. He takes him at his own rating; accepts his pose; treats the Childe, and Conrad, and Manfred, as the lacerated and terrific persons that they claim to be, and regrets the effect of their example on society; reads *Don Juan* in a manly spirit, disclaiming 'priestlike cant,' but 'charging' the author with a tendency to undermine public virtue. We can see that he marvels nevertheless, and in his heart enjoys being harrowed. The whole point of view is remote from ours, and we are fascinated by its simplicity. That Byron should thus have affected a deeply fastidious, upright, dogmatic, scandalised little Scotch advocate and arbiter of elegances gives us the measure of his contemporary power. By Wordsworth[2] Jeffrey was also stirred, more reluctantly. He does not merely wish to be fair to him as to a prisoner at the bar; Jeffrey, his biographer tells us, loved the sky and all natural things, and in the midst of his railing he stops and is grave. His reviews of Wordsworth are full of such pauses and concessions. He regarded him as a true man and lofty genius who had been too often seduced into the infantine, trivial, and fantastic; admires *Brougham Castle*, and some of the sonnets, and many other things, in his own despite. All this makes Jeffrey interesting.

The truth is he was too clever, and had too much real feeling, wholly to resist the time. His essay on 'Beauty'[3] in the *Britannica* shows, amidst some rather futile psychology (founded chiefly upon Alison's *Essays on Taste*), that he was sensitive to beauty; and one passage, not without eloquence, forecasts Ruskin's point of view that natural and artistic beauty is rooted in the 'human interest' attached to it; a view which may be incomplete, but which does not show any dryness of soul. Jeffrey, in fact, is ever tripping gingerly in the rear of Romance, pulling himself up when he feels his pace is too quick, relieving his classical conscience by see-sawing judicially, and shrilly pouncing on obvious or supposed blemishes, but really dragged onwards. He is most at his ease with

Scott's novels, which do not frighten him, and, after due reserves to make sure that he is still a critic, revels in them and praises them well. His notices of the 'secondary Scotch novels' of Lockhart, Galt, and Wilson, and of Mrs. Hamilton's *Cottagers of Glenburnie*,[1] are models of their sort. He may seem to give too much room to mere summaries; but these summaries contain some of his best handiwork; and he never falls into the modern vice of reviewing a book without giving a clear image of its contents. He is most successful, indeed, with 'secondary writers,' who are often the hardest of all to judge. His statement of the poetic models of Barry Cornwall,[2] part Elizabethan, part romantic, could not be bettered, with its conclusion that 'the materials really harmonise very tolerably.' He has no divine flame, no feeling for the unsaid; he is finite, and Latin, and academic, and distrusts his sensations while supremely confident in his opinions. His courage is always refreshing. He admires Burns deeply, and enjoys him, but states what may be called the gentlemanly objections to Burns—to his acrimony, want of chivalry, and bragging independence—with a sharpness that did no harm. The endless fatuous admirers of the 'bard' require at least one such shock in every generation as those administered by Jeffrey and by Henley. But the next article in the *Review* on Burns, which came out under Jeffrey's rule, was Carlyle's, and we are in a new world of criticism.

Jeffrey's perky, neat, exasperating manner; his talk of 'bringing charges,' and of 'declining to rescind' his sentences, has served him ill with posterity, which has also 'declined to rescind.' These tricks, and those of his imitators, provoked some apt retorts and parodies at the time. Moore, in the prose interludes of *Lalla Rookh*, makes the Great Chamberlain, Fadladeen, criticise the poem itself in the full-blown reviewer's fashion, which is by no means over-mimicked:

> With respect to the style, it was worthy of the matter;—it had not even those politic contrivances of structure which make up for the commonness of the thought by the peculiarity of the manner, nor that stately poetical phraseology by which sentiments mean in themselves, like the blacksmith's apron converted into a banner, are so easily gilt and embroidered into consequence. Then, as to the versification, it was, to say no worse of it, execrable; it had neither the copious flow of Ferdosi, the sweetness of Hafez, nor the sententious march of Sadi; but appeared to him, in the uneasy heaviness of its movements, to have been modelled on the gait of a very tired dromedary.

A subtler assault was made in 1807 by Edward Copleston, afterwards Bishop of Llandaff, in his *Advice to a Young Reviewer*,[1] *with a Specimen of the Art*. A rag of the mantle of Swift descended upon Copleston, and Oxford rejoiced at the scarifying slap dealt to Edinburgh. The young reviewer is advised to 'write what will *sell*'; to work chiefly upon the preface of the book that he is noticing, for here he will discover 'a fund of wealth lying upon the surface'; and, above all, to find fault:

> If anybody complains that the great and more valuable parts remain unnoticed; your answer is that it is impossible to pay attention to all, and that your duty is rather to prevent the propagation of error, than to lavish praises upon that which, if really excellent, will work its way in the world without your help.

The 'Specimen' is a review of '*L'Allegro*, by Mr. Milton,' who seems 'to have a turn for this species of nursery tales and prattling lullabies'; and after some pleasantries concerning the fabled pedigree of Mirth, the thing concludes:

> Upon the whole Mr. Milton seems to be possessed of some fancy and talent for rhyming; two most dangerous endowments, which often unfit men for acting a useful part in life, without qualifying them for that which is great and brilliant. . . . With the help of Cocker and common industry, he may become a respectable scrivener; but it is not all the Zephyrs, and Auroras, and Corydons, and Thyrsis's; aye, nor his 'junketing Queen Mab' and 'drudging goblins,' that will ever make him a Poet.

And yet Jeffrey (to speak in his own manner) though not a great, is not a bad, writer. His style is eighteenth century to the backbone. He was wont to decry the writers of the age of Anne, and loved the Elizabethans much more[2] (including John Ford); and herein he belongs to his time; but there is no doubt as to his own pedigree. At his best he is plain, light, nimble, and correct, with occasional washes (if the term may be used) of romantic colour, and flying touches of sensibility. He once said to Macaulay, 'The more I think, the less I can imagine where you picked up that style.' It was picked up, largely, from Jeffrey himself; there is the same precision, the dogmatic short clauses, the lack of atmosphere, the superfluity of edge—everything, perhaps, but the antithesis and accumulative skill. Macaulay's *Milton* came out in the *Review* in 1825, and his admiration for Jeffrey—'as near perfection as any human being with whom I have been acquainted,' is touching, and in comic contrast to Carlyle's iconoclasm.

To follow Jeffrey further would be to review again much of the literature of his age. His excursions among foreign writers swell the account, and his dealings with *Wilhelm Meister*, Madame de Staël, and Alfieri are all the more odd and piquant when they are blind dealings. His final praise is perhaps to have invented the modern review article. It was at least a new, and perhaps a permanent, mould for criticism. At the worst, he made reviewing honest, circumstantial, instructed, and lucid. He made it a high profession, which it is. He pronounced, rightly or wrongly, but in a distinct and reasoned way, upon a vast number of the books of note published during the romantic period. He made a public ; he made greater critics than himself possible and audible after him.

II

One of the chief builders of the *Edinburgh Review* was Henry Brougham.[1] He is said to have contributed eighty articles in five years, an average of four to each issue ; and, once, to have written an entire number. They are on all manner of things—scientific and political, literary and legal. They are all dead ; they have neither the clear finish of Jeffrey's, nor the durable quality of Sydney Smith's. This is an index of Brougham's activities in general, and of the fate of most of his writings and speeches. The immense number of words that he printed, out of the incalculable number that he penned and uttered, has served him little with a later generation ; and his place in a survey, or even in a history, of literature, is a most dubious one. The noise he made, the infinite dust he disturbed, the great and real services he did to the cause of justice, law reform, popular instruction—all this is now matter for the labours of the political and social historian. Even at the end of his long lifetime (1778-1868) Lord Brougham was already something of a legend, as we see from the sketch made of him in 1857 (when his collected works were published) by the acutest of critics. Bagehot's study is a model of an intellectual portrait ; but we see that the Brougham who wrote in the early *Edinburgh* numbers, who fought the slave-trade, and defended Queen Caroline, who from 1820 to 1830 was at the pinnacle of his fame and power, who worked like a demon for Reform, who was the despair of his political friends and foes, and of all Lord Chancellors the most incalculable ;—we see that this personage, long before his death, had become a somewhat inexplicable name ; and from his writings, selected

by himself and revised, we can only, with an effort, reconstruct the impression that he made.

Very few of his works are saved by their form, for Brougham usually wrote even worse than Mr. Gladstone. They are heavy, parenthetical, rough and ready in their average workmanship, and turbidly elaborate in their more ambitious flights. There is not much in their language which helps us to imagine the compass, power, and flexibility of Brougham's spoken voice. They are reports of the words of a great orator, journalist, and lecturer. We seldom, it is true, fail to feel that the subject, whatever it is, is in the grip of a strong, vehement, and prehensile mind. Brougham's account of the British Constitution has this quality, and his best speeches have it still more. The famous oration for Queen Caroline, which modern poets and playwrights have made use of, has been unduly depreciated, with its loud seven-times written peroration. It all sounds terribly overblown eloquence; but the note of fury, of sincerity, of rasping irony, rings through, and the whole is anything but a made-up forensic display of wrath. Brougham's revision has not deprived it of the accent of real speech; even the awkward qualifications and involutions of the sentences give the sense of reality; they are the retreats and parries of the expert fencer from moment to moment, as he retires to the wall or lunges out advancing. The same impression is left by some of his efforts on slighter occasions; one of the most justly admired was the speech in defence of a provincial newspaper, which had censured the refusal of the Durham clergy to toll for the death of Queen Caroline.

Brougham studied the art of the spoken word with special vigour, and nourished himself on Demosthenes. He thought out his arrangement; he calculated his anger, and turned it on, like a jet of boiling water, at the right or wrong instant—like an engineer; he was fertile, ready, reckless, and portentous. It is odd that the results do not come, as he hoped they would, into the annals of literature; but the truth is that Brougham had little sense either of beauty and grace, or of measure, reserve, and relief. He is probably at his best in his accounts of statesmen and speakers, many of whom he had known and seen. His analysis of Burke's oratory and its defects, and of the sources of its power, is full of shrewdness and experience; and we often trace the influence of Burke when Brougham sets himself to charge, to colour, and to amplify his point. The pictures of Fox, Erskine, and Windham are admirable, and more leisured than Brougham's ordinary writing. His

autobiography, written in advanced age, was a failure, and contains many erroneous statements. His addresses on the value of knowledge and the duty of diffusing information are only to be read by the adventurous.

Dry rot is in Brougham's tomes, and has touched Jeffrey's; Francis Horner[1] is a shadowy name; but the writing of Sydney Smith[2] (1771-1845) remains fresh, though most of the causes he fought for have prevailed. By his own report, he suggested the *Review*; he edited its first number, and wrote in it for over a quarter of a century, and there is still much salt in his contributions. His notices of books are marked by a pert and cheerful wit, and by a shrewd, rapid, and complacent judgment. His executions are neatly carried out. Reviewing a foolish play by Matthew Gregory Lewis,[3] he hails the 'symptoms of returning, or perhaps nascent purity' in the mind of its author; and of Hope's *Anastasius* he prophetically observes that 'it is too long; and if this novel perish and is forgotten it is solely on that account.' He is anti-romantic, and cheerfully insular in sentiment; in Madame de Staël's *Delphine* he sees only 'dismal trash,' adding that it 'is calculated to shed a mild lustre over adultery.' But for pure letters he does not care greatly, and writes best when he writes with a purpose, or about books that have a purpose. He is not witty for wit's sake, his jokes are an arm of offence, and his method is to make wicked absurdities seem ridiculous. This is seen best in his longer and more consequent compositions. His *Letters on the Subject of the Catholics, to my Brother Abraham, who Lives in the Country, by Peter Plymley* (1808), form, together with *A Letter to the Electors upon the Catholic Question* (1808), a classic of our fighting literature. They are a shrapnel-fire of indignant, reasoned, and effective ridicule, in favour of Catholic Emancipation. The same style and vigour are found, undimmed, in the *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton on the Ecclesiastical Commission* (1837-9), in which the veteran Whig finds himself protesting against his brother-shepherds who seem to be playing tricks with the Establishment.

Sydney Smith has not the mental ascendency of Swift, or his careless perfection of language, but he is more scrupulous, humane, and generous; there is no mystery about him, nothing that baffles or frightens the ordinary reader. He is less a master of idiom, less primitive, than Cobbett, and also less kaleidoscopic and unreasonable; he is far better educated, and more of the trained rhetorician. Indeed, he often suggests Macaulay, and may have taught him some of his devices.

His impassioned plea for the Catholics, especially the Irish Catholics, takes the shape of a scornful appeal to the dormant reason of the English clergy. His wit and temper are not Irish at all, but he appreciates the Irish claims better than most writers of his time. He drives home to the head his argument against fanatical coercion and anti-Popish mania. Sometimes his eloquence reaches a truly lofty pitch, as in the passage where he proclaims that the true spirit of policy is 'to fling down no man's altar, to punish no man's prayer.' But his usual tone is that of a man exposing stupidity to the stupid. The English, he constantly feels and says, are stupid, and live on prejudice and legend. The contemplation of their density irritates him into positive alarm when he contrasts it with the sagacity of Bonaparte and his politic toleration of the Jews in Paris. In 1808 (*Plymley's Letters*, No. V.) he writes much in the strain of the military Conservative press of to-day (1912):

> You cannot imagine, you say, that England will ever be ruined and conquered; and for no other reason that I can find, but because it seems so very odd that it should be ruined and conquered. Alas! so reasoned, in their time, the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian Plymleys. But the English are brave; so were all these nations. You might get together a hundred thousand men individually brave; but without generals capable of commanding such a machine, it would be as useless as a first-rate man-of-war manned by Oxford clergymen, or Parisian shopkeepers. I do not say this to the disparagement of British officers; they have had no means of acquiring experience; but I do say it to create alarm; for we do not appear to me to be half alarmed enough, or to entertain that sense of our danger which leads to the most obvious means of self-defence.

The passage is a good instance of Sydney Smith's straight and biting style, working ever, like Macaulay's, up to a concrete name or illustration—the 'Oxford clergymen'—which is meant to stick in the memory of the dullest.

It would take time to recount the causes on behalf of which he went forth to battle. In his campaign for toleration, he descends from Hales and Locke, pleading the folly and inexpediency of the opposite course, and not founding himself on the abstract rights of the victim. There is less than nothing of the revolutionary theorist in him; .indeed, he represents the English revulsion from mere doctrine to considerations of universal good sense. Still he touches Bentham, whom he admires; and constitutes himself the populariser of that difficult, subdividing author, who 'invents new and alarming

expressions' and so does injustice to his own acuteness. The well-known 'Noodle's Oration' occurs in a review of the *Book of Fallacies*.[1] His articles on prison reform, the game laws, and man-traps, are in essence Benthamite tracts. His contemptuous detachment from the English caste is most clearly shown in his papers on education. Sydney Smith attacks the fetish of the public schools, the monopoly of the classical tongues, and the exclusion of women from equal opportunities of instruction. In an article on female education, written in 1810, we see that the epoch of Mary Wollstonecraft and passionate theorising, and also the epoch of Mrs. Trimmer and the governess ideal, has gone, and that the epoch of rational reform is in prospect. He is by no means what would now be called a 'feminist,' but is disconcerting, in his line of argument, to the extremer persons of that camp.

> Can anything, for example, be more perfectly absurd than to suppose that the care and perpetual solicitude which a mother feels for her children, depends upon her ignorance of Greek and of Mathematics; and that she would desert an infant for a quadratic equation? We seem to imagine that we can break in pieces the most solemn institutions of nature, by the little laws of a boarding-school; and that the existence of the human race depends upon teaching women a little more or a little less;—that Cimmerian ignorance can aid parental affection, or the circle of arts and sciences produce its destruction.

This is something like good perspective; and accordingly Sydney Smith does not fit very well into the age that is baptized 'romantic'; but there he is in it, with his enlightened Whiggery, which is the most recalcitrant of all elements when we try to exhaust the definition of such an age by such a term.

One of the oddest and also the most distinctive traits of this active, beneficent country parson, is his conviction that the human animal cannot stand more than a certain amount of religion. 'The Methodists[2] are always desirous of making men more religious than it is possible, from the constitution of human nature, to make them.' The shades of Wesley and of Newman rise up in concert against this notion; but it is quite a sound one, and the hold of Sydney Smith's class and type upon the English nation is largely due to their firm grasp of it. People, he says, who try to make more of religion than it will bear are ignorant of men; are for ever

> inviting them to ride, walk, row, wrestle, and dine out religiously; forgetting that the being to whom this impossible purity is recom-

mended, is a being compelled to scramble for his existence and support for ten hours out of the sixteen he is awake ;—forgetting that he must dig, beg, read, think, move, pay, receive, praise, scold, command, and obey ;—forgetting also that if men conversed as often upon religious subjects as they do upon the ordinary occurrences of the world, they would converse upon them with the same familiarity and want of respect, etc.

This combination of reverence and reticence with an unmystical temper and a sense of the ludicrous may not make a poet or a profound speculator ; it is the very prose of religion ; but it gives something for working days, and is a safeguard against bigotry. On its negative side, it comes down from the rationalising eighteenth century. It reminds us of the alleged epitaph upon the churchman ' whose glory it was to have been a lifelong enemy of all forms of enthusiasm ' ; like Locke and Hume, who wrote upon that phenomenon in the spirit of pathologists analysing a morbid growth.

The celebrated ' wit ' of Sydney Smith is a pervading habit of mind, and not only a trick of words ; and it is certainly very easy, and natural, and telling ; but it is often enough blunt and loud. It is pamphlet wit, so phrased as to pierce very thick heads. It is not meant merely to amuse persons who are in sympathy with the speaker. Nothing subtle would serve. It easily runs into the kind of cheery snap and crackle that are remarkably ephemeral. Sydney Smith jested in order to enforce certain purposes, which history, it will perhaps be agreed, has pronounced to be right and noble ones. And it is often his purpose that keeps his wit alive, rather than the converse. When the purpose is smart reviewing, there is less to be said for the joke. It can, indeed, as with Macaulay, become vulgar enough :

> Mr. Edgeworth seems to possess the sentiments of an accomplished gentleman, the information of a scholar, and the vivacity of a first-rate harlequin. He is fuddled with animal spirits, giddy with constitutional joy ; in such a state he must have written on or burst. A discharge of ink was an evacuation absolutely necessary, to avoid final and plethoric congestion.

What is amusing about this is, that it was long supposed to be amusing. Can we not hear through it the stentorian voice, ' like the bell of St. Paul's,' which startled the ear-trumpet of Harriet Martineau, at an assembly, upon her introduction to Sydney Smith ? It is true that it comes from one of the brave early numbers of the *Review*. It is fairer to take

mellower examples of a man s style ; and the best of these may be found when Sydney Smith is no longer fighting and committed to emphasis, but when his genial judgment is at work, and when his wit, now touched by humour, is kept down and instrumental to art. For art there really is in his *Letter on the Character of Sir James Mackintosh*,[1] and in his similar letter to the brother of Francis Horner. These are 'characters' in the old usage of the term, and masterly things ; lacking, it is true, the gradation, the sense of complexity in the mind described, that we find in a portrait by Burke or Clarendon ; every trait is in equal relief ; but we feel that the shortcomings are painted in, not from malice, nor from the necessity of finding some fault, but justly and in their natural context. Thus he says of Mackintosh :

> But though easily warmed by great schemes of benevolence and human improvement, his manner was cold to individuals. There was an apparent want of heartiness and cordiality. It seemed as if he had more affection for the species than for the ingredients of which it was composed. He was in reality very hospitable, and so fond of company, that he was hardly happy out of it ; but he did not receive his friends with that honest joy, which warms more than dinner or wine.

This is incidentally, and by contrariety, a character of Sydney Smith himself. The humour is more subdued and sympathetic in his account of Horner :

> The commandments were written on his face, and I have often told him there was not a crime he might not commit with impunity, as no judge or jury who saw him would give the smallest degree of credit to any evidence against him ; there was in his look a calm settled love of all that was honourable and good—an air of wisdom and sweetness ; you saw at once that he was a great man, whom nature had intended for a leader of human beings.

Sydney Smith's style has the higher qualities, without the impermanence, of journalism. He is instantaneous and direct, never wastes a word, and opens straight upon his subject. His little descriptions, like that of the scenery of Botany Bay or of the countries visited by Waterton (of the *Wanderings*), have the same quality. His diction is pure and sharp, like Hazlitt's ; whom he rivals, not in imaginative power or insight, but in the excellence and ease of his fighting English. He has the brevity and unencumbered naturalness of the best Georgian prose, without the discoloured flatness into which it had fallen.

III

The *Quarterly Review*,[1] after parleyings between Murray, Canning, and Scott, was founded in 1809, with Gifford for editor, in order to countervail the *Edinburgh*, rally the Tories, and establish a rival oracle. Its four pillars were to be politics, literature, scholarship, and science. So strong a staff was soon enlisted, that we wonder to-day at the dimness of the old articles as we turn them over. In politics, one of the controlling spirits and most profuse contributors—who during forty-five years produced no fewer than two hundred and fifty-eight articles—was John Wilson Croker,[2] secretary to the Admiralty. A rasping satirist, a narrow-souled critic of letters, an acrimonious partisan, Croker was nevertheless a minute and often accurate investigator, and an able expounder and disputant. He was also a more disinterested and useful person than was long supposed. The enmity, not altogether worthy, of Macaulay and Benjamin Disraeli has done him some wrong. But Croker does not survive in literature, although his edition of Boswell's *Johnson*, assaulted by Macaulay and defended by Lockhart, has served later scholars well.

Another copious writer, of the solid order, was Sir John Barrow, the traveller, Chinese savant, and South African statesman. Barrow poured out innumerable reviews of voyages and travels, which are still the best contemporary survey of that class of literature. Southey, in the course of thirty years, wrote nearly a hundred articles, and Scott, during the remainder of his life (1809-32), about thirty. The number of all these contributions, and their variety, strike the reader at once. Scott was ready to talk about anything, from fly-fishing to Pepys's Diary, and Southey about anything from Lord Nelson to the Poor Laws. There was, it is true, no Brougham on the *Quarterly*; its sciolism was only comparative; and many of its articles were by professed students, of whom the list is too long to repeat. Hallam and Sharon Turner wrote on history, Malthus and Senior on economy, Ugo Foscolo on the Italian classics—all these and many more figure in the register, and the band swelled as time went on. Gifford's editorship lasted till 1824; then, after a short tenure by J. T. Coleridge, the reins were taken in 1826 by Lockhart, who kept them for nearly thirty years. An admirable editor, he wrote most comously in the *Review*, and it might have been said, but for the *Life of Scott*, that he buried his genius in the task.

Criticism in the *Quarterly* was taken seriously from the first;

but many of its pronouncements were ill-starred. No one would turn to these old reviews to get any real picture of the condition or hopes of English letters between 1809 and 1830. This is not due to the ordinary blindness of contemporaries; for the few volumes of the *London Magazine* (1820-9) throw a flood of light on the living spirit of poetry and imagination in that age. Nor is it due to want of wits, which it would be absurd to impute to such a staff. There are, of course, exceptions; Scott's notices of Miss Austen (No. 27, Oct. 1815), or Ellis's of *The Lord of the Isles* and *The Corsair*, are still worth reading. On the other hand, Croker's treatment of Miss Owenson's stories, or the notorious review of Keats, are painfully instructive. Even where political bias does not rule, the Quarterly Reviewers seem curiously blank in the presence of artistic excellence; some organ is lacking, which is present not only in the greater critics of the time, but in lesser ones like Leigh Hunt and Darley, or even in Wainewright the poisoner. Neither is there the youth and flush of the writers for *Blackwood's Magazine*, which was founded in 1817, partly in order to supply this deficiency, and partly to provide a rallying point for the Scottish Tories.

Before passing to Wilson and his sharpshooters, some features common to the big quarterlies may be brought into relief. These 'organs' were not prescient; they were, in general, pretentious; their air of authority now seems ridiculous; and there is little in them, during the period we are considering, that would be worth a reprint. Still, their service to English culture, as distinct from their contribution to literature, is undeniable. They partly realised the aim of their founders. This may have been, in the first instance, to work out and enforce the strategy of one party or the other. But precisely because, in England, the idea of party strikes so deep, and means so much more than itself, involving, if it is truly bottomed and applied in earnest, the great, historic divisions of national opinion concerning life and thought and art;—just for this reason, the scope of the enterprise became enlarged; and the Radical, or Whig, or Tory colouring given to the treatment of these greater themes is not wholly a loss. We can never, it is true, rest in such verdicts, or take them at the valuation of such a court; they destroy the free play of mind, they rightly disgust the independent critic; and the next generation lifts its eyebrows over them. But, at any rate, they *represent* something. They are not the whim of an individual, any more than they are words of eternal reason. They are the voice, or

the voices raised in unison, of a powerful, concerted, not despicable band of intellects. They tell us, for good or ill, what half of cultivated Britain was agreed in thinking at a particular moment. The great, fertilising ideas that alter speculation or mould poetry do not, it is true, arise in this fashion, but are conceived in the solitude of Königsberg or Grasmere. Nor are the official organs of opinion the first to hail, or to circulate, such ideas: on the contrary; but, for a picture of the national mind and opinion, not at its lonely and lofty fountain-heads, nor yet in its 'low fat levels,' but in its upper, civilised ranges, we may well turn to a few faded numbers of the *Edinburgh* or the *Quarterly*.

Their military purpose was well served by two practices which at once strike the artist as pestilent. First of all, the articles, critical as well as controversial, were unsigned. No victim knew, or at least was supposed to know, who had fired a particular cannon or musket shot. If there was any life left in him, he could only aim back at the editor, who was well entrenched. These figures of speech become literally true in the case of the unhappy John Scott, of the *London Magazine*, who fell in the famous duel with J. H. Christie; and the burlesque encounter of Jeffrey and Moore might have been a tragedy. But, in general, the missile was impersonal in source; it came from the *Review*. To speak in different terms, the judgment was that of a last court of appeal. The conscience, the solemn consideration, of half the community were behind it; such was the pretence, or such the impression. In political warfare no one can well complain of this method; the journalist, sinking all personal differences, agrees with his chief and his fellows to accept such discipline. In criticism, too, the practice has been defended, and that by persons of weight, on the ground that the result is franker, and that social perplexities are evaded; it is defended, too, by the editorial mind, which banks the talent of unknown contributors to the credit of his journal. Few will say, however, that the best criticism gains by not being publicly identified with the author, or that he is not robbed of his payment in glory; or that he is not tempted, fatally, to mould himself to the general, the infectious, style of his journal; or, yet again, to be careless as to those last fine scruples of thought and style, which would have wrought with him had he signed his name. Few but men of strong, insuppressible character, like Lamb or Carlyle, can resist these lures. Editors, as a rule, are not patient with such scruples, or with violently individual genius. Gifford complained that

every one recognised the prose of Southey, because it was so good ; and, to Southey's useless chagrin, tampered with it freely.

This despotic habit of the editors is the second of the practices to which we have alluded. It is mostly out of date ; and it proceeded from the same notion of party discipline, not merely from love of meddling or of power. The essay, the article, the criticism, was thought of not as a work of art, or of decent handicraft, coming from a single mind, but as ammunition to be used in the service of a policy by one controlling brain. Hence the good old fashion of cutting, carving, adding, qualifying, and at need virtually falsifying, at headquarters. It seems wonderful how well, in spite of grumbling, men like Scott or Southey stood it, until we remember that they accepted the general procedure, that they did not sign, and, it must be added, that they were very well paid. Scott's anonymous review of his early novels has been already mentioned ; it is a leading case for quotation. It was half a jest ; but it was also seriously meant to redress the imperfect appreciation by Croker of the same works. Gifford, this time benevolent, appended some paragraphs of robust eulogy to Scott's carefully-balanced judgments. This was very well at the time ; but after a while Scott's authorship became known ; and it was only revealed with absolute certainty in 1909, that he had not compared himself with Shakespeare ; after the manner of the legendary critic, who anonymously, and in a religious journal, referred to himself as the ' great and good ' Mr. Such-and-Such.

IV

The Whig oracle pronounced its dooms at quarterly intervals in the North and the Tory oracle in the South. But meantime the opposition to the *Edinburgh* broke out in its own metropolis. The Scottish Tories regarded it not only as an anti-patriotic organ, which had thrown cold water on the conduct of our arms against Bonaparte, but as lineally descended from the eighteenth-century sceptics, and all too temperate in defence of religion ; and they called it, with much exaggeration, infidel. They hated the cool intellectual temper, the complacency, the air of heaven-sent authority with which it spoke. Above all, they found it cold to genius, dead to the nobler sort of literature, and especially unfair to Wordsworth. Such was the cry, not unwarranted, of Wilson and Lockhart, who first opened fire upon the *Edinburgh Review* in the North. In *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819), Lockhart aims these

ourali-tipped shafts with the skill of a Red Indian. What, in a famous phrase, he calls the 'facetious and rejoicing ignorance' of the Reviewers, has, he complains, infected their Scottish readers, and enhanced their innate conceit.

> I do not on my conscience believe, that there is one Whig in Edinburgh to whom the name of my friend Charles Lamb would convey any distinct or definite idea. . . . They do not know even the names of some of the finest poems our age has produced. They never heard of *Ruth, or Michael,* or *The Brothers,* or *Hartleap Well,* or the *Recollections of Infancy,* or the *Sonnets to Buonaparte.* They do not know that there is such a thing as the description of a churchyard in *The Excursion.* Alas! how severely is their ignorance punished in itself.

Lockhart's vision, at this stage, was not a little bloodshot; but we see what it was that stung him and his friends, and it is hard to feel concern for the *Review,* whose ossification on the literary and spiritual side needs no proving. It is clear that literature first of all, rather than politics or orthodoxy, was the concern of the rebels. Had they really founded a just and catholic tribunal of letters, they would have had a better right to speak. But the beginnings of *Blackwood's Edinburgh*[1] *Magazine* deprived them of this right.

The heavy quarterlies had, besides their partisanship, two other great defects; they were seldom amusing, except in their bludgeoning way, and they were not creative. They consisted of political articles, dissertations, and reviews. They admitted no tales, no skits, no verse, and they had no play of humour or fancy. Some minds of great eminence, such as Scott and Hazlitt, found voice in them, but only within the prescribed limits. In *Blackwood's* this tradition was broken down, and a new one founded, which, after the first years of uproar, cleared itself, persisted honourably and gaily, and infected periodical journalism at large. 'Maga,' as it was domestically called, really began in October 1817, though William Blackwood had started a solid and respectable monthly under another title a few months earlier. John Wilson, or 'Christopher North,' and Lockhart, were already on the staff, but only opened fire fairly in the autumn; and the first year of the magazine was defaced by some rabid notorious performances,[2] such as the attack on Coleridge, the droller sally of the 'Chaldee manuscript,' and the abusive review of Keats; of which the authorship is only partially known, and which shall not be discussed here. Some of them were retracted and lamented, but mischief was done. This

is not to take too seriously the sallies of young wits and high bloods. We are not to be prim when we go to see a prize-fight; but there are rules, and the foul blow against Keats (though it did not, as was long supposed, kill him) is on the record. *Blackwood's* has, happily, much to plead on the other side of the reckoning.

For its old numbers can still be *read*, unlike those of most of its rivals, and like those of the *London Magazine* and the *Liberal*, things of a briefer span. It does not, like the *London Magazine*, contain *Elia* and *The Opium-eater*, nor, like the *Liberal*, *The Vision of Judgment* and *My First Acquaintance with Poets*. But it has a diffused excellence, a fund of life and youth; it has the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, and a number of good stories, papers by Hogg, Galt, and many more; and some ardent and generous criticisms. And it opens many a new vein of interest. It contains some of Lockhart's *Spanish Ballads*, and his versions from *Faust*; it includes papers on German, and Italian, and Norse letters. No recitation of these things is possible here, and it is better to notice the work of two of its leaders. Blackwood seems always to have remained in control, but the stamp was given by Lockhart, and still more by Wilson, with whom the genius of the *Magazine*, as distinct from its wit, satire, and contumely, was popularly identified. He was also answerable for some of its bad taste and bad breeding, but he poured into it, wastefully enough from the point of view of his own fame, a riotous and splendid tide of life and spirits.

From 1825 onwards John Wilson,[1] or 'Christopher North' (1785-1854), produced stories, articles, sketches, and above all his dialogues called *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, with portentous fertility and speed. More than two hundred and fifty of his contributions can be counted from first to last, and in one year (1834) he averaged more than four in a month. His *Noctes* began in 1825 and made Wilson's name, but he had written for the *Magazine* very early, and he had praised Wordsworth with unsparing cordiality. A Scot of noble presence, gallant nature, abounding physical power, and huge productive energy, Wilson had won undergraduate celebrity at Oxford, and also his share of classical scholarship. He had settled at Elleray on Windermere, and produced his narrative poem, *The Isle of Palms*, in 1812, chiefly under Wordsworth's influence. He had been well-to-do, but lost much of his money, was thrown on literature, and settled for life in Edinburgh; this apparent disaster was the making of him, and led to the disclosure of his genius. Another poem, in dramatic guise, *The City of the*

Plague, appeared in 1816, and Wilson wrote much verse besides. But he spent most of his days, like Jeffrey, in working for one periodical. His three novels were published serially in *Blackwood's*. In 1820, with little reason, he was appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh, and, at any rate, fired his students and humanised the style and title of 'Professor.' He became a picturesque and adored personage of Old Edinburgh, and one of its famous figures. Much of his best work was done before 1835, but he went on writing, without change of style or theme, almost to the last. John Wilson was a great creature, though he has left little that is permanent. If he is an example of the disadvantage, in art, of temperament without definite plastic power, still on every page is felt what De Quincey called 'his large expansiveness of heart, and a certain air of noble frankness which overspread everything he said.'

De Quincey,[1] in 1829, was preparing a second article on the genius of John Wilson, having published one already; and Wilson, in the ingenuous manner of the time, wrote him, in the form of interrogatories, some useful headings:

> If you think *The Isle of Palms* and *The City of the Plague* original poems (in design) I hope you will say so. . . . If you think me a good private character, do say so. . . . Base brutes have libelled my personal character. . . . I have wished [in his novels] to speak of humble life and the elementary feelings of the human heart under the light of a veil of poetry. Have I done so? Pathos, a sense of beauty, and humour, I think I possess. Do I? In *The City of the Plague* there ought to be something of the sublime. Is there? . . . I wish you would praise me as a lecturer on Moral Philosophy. That would do me good; and say that I am thoroughly logical and argumentative, if it is true; not a rhetorician, as fools aver. I think with practice and opportunities I would have been an orator. Am I a good critic?

The Isle of Palms and *City of the Plague* are not original in design, for they have little design; but pathos they have, like many of Wilson's briefer poems which are in the nature of lyrical ballads; and while the influence of Wordsworth (and of Wordsworth's country, which Wilson long inhabited) is omnipresent, the pathos is of a diffused, not to say watered kind, without any of Wordsworth's concentration; it is true pathos, but it is without style, and therefore the poems are transient. Wilson also derives a good deal from Scott, having the same kind of manly, chivalrous, and sporting interests, and being himself a mighty athlete and a splendid, Apolline, brilliant piece of manhood. *The Isle of Palms* is a variant on the kind

of lay that Scott invented, full of sentiment and tropical scenery. There is nothing 'sublime' in any of Wilson's verse, but the 'sense of beauty' there is, far exceeding the power of expression. *The Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life* and *The Trials of Margaret Lyndsay*, which concern 'humble life,' have really the aim he describes, but are monotonous and show little of the 'humour,' which, with the best right in the world, Wilson claims to possess. His lectures may have been 'logical,' but have not survived their occasion, and by all accounts were largely displays of vivid eloquence. In one thing Wilson is too modest, when he says that he 'could have been an orator.' He was an orator, in his spoken discourse, and also in his prose. It is astonishing oratory, rushing, various, inexhaustible—and almost impossible to read long, or to remember. There is more in it, not only of high spirits, but of *spirit*, than in any author of the time. The South Briton, until he has read a few of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, has no notion of what old Scottish convivial eloquence can be, when in full spate. The amount of rubbish, and of treasure, that it can sweep along, is incredible. Anthologies are of little use; you cannot 'select' from a torrent. Nor can you endure it long at a time; the noise is not always melodious, and often it is a torrent of whisky. Shouts, horse-play, vulgarity, rigmarole, ditties, enormous hearty virulence, still more enormous eulogies! Out of all this emerge, too soon to be whirled away in the din, snatches of exquisite, improvised—rather fatally improvised—lyric prose; a great exhalation of the joy of life, of sport, of poetry; lovely, disappearing glimpses of landscape, and bursts of tender or pathetic feeling; and, over all, a real gift of dramatic, humorous keeping in the portraits of the interlocutors. Christopher North, the president of the revels, is Wilson himself, facetiously *outré* and expanded; the 'Ettrick Shepherd' is James Hogg boisterously idealised; the oddness, the wildness, the explosiveness recorded of Hogg are shown; but much is imputed to his talk which seems to have been only in his verse, if even there; the Shepherd has much of the loud wit and eloquence of Wilson himself. Yet he is a genuine creation, and if we have too much of him we can shut the book.

Wilson is not a 'good critic,' but as a critic he exists, because he has the poetic spirit. He has no critical brains, strictly speaking, and such is his prejudice, and readiness for measureless absurdity, that no one can think of trusting him, especially where he condemns. He is the exact opposite of Jeffrey; he is all sensibility and superlatives, both in praise and blame;

he is expansive, and has no dry dapper conclusiveness of tone. He can be equally offensive in his own way, especially where he praises. It is easy to see why Tennyson could not 'forgive the praise,' in the review of his poems of 1832. But 'crusty,' 'musty,' and the like, are just the wrong epithets for 'Christopher'; whose voice, in that substantially shrewd and generous notice, is that of the cheery, stentorian, Scotch professor, smiting a promising youth on the head, and then slapping him on the back, for a faulty but brilliant exercise. Wilson really picks out some of the good things in that volume; and among those that he censured are some that Tennyson afterwards withdrew.

His slapdash judgments, which often miss fire totally, but are also apt to go near the mark, are well seen in his paper, *An Hour's Talk about Poets*[1] (1831), of which the burden is that no one in his own day has written a 'great poem'; a species of which his only exemplar appears to be *Paradise Lost*. By a great poem he means a long great poem of the serious kind, a cathedral of a poem; and although he is terribly inclined to make an exception for Southey, and for Joanna Baillie too, in his main contention he is by chance nearly right, and in his flying criticisms often sagacious. He does not name Shelley, who, after all, has the best claim to the honour; *The Prelude* was not published; *Don Juan* is out of his category, and shocks him; and in *The Excursion* he sees, justly enough, only a series of poetic episodes. Probably his great service to criticism was one of which he was rightly proud. With Lockhart, he praised Wordsworth from the first, through good report and evil; and he boasts, in his large way, of

> the belief, or rather knowledge, that we have helped to diffuse Wordsworth's poetry, not only over this island, but the furthest dependencies of the British empire and throughout the United States of America.

When Wordsworth's verse was 'scarcely known except through the *Edinburgh Review*,' Wilson proclaimed him, with Scott and Byron, as 'one of the three great master-spirits of our day in the poetical world.' For this, if for nothing else, he should be honoured.

V

Of all these earlier despots of letters, founders of journalism, and critical Jack Ketches, only one, John Gibson Lockhart[2] (1794-1854), has left work that stands. He was better trained in letters, he had more poetical reading, and he wrote uniformly

better and rarer English, than Jeffrey, Gifford, or Wilson. He was taught at Glasgow, Oxford, and Edinburgh ; and was well seen, not only in the classics, but in French, Spanish, Italian, and afterwards in German. At twenty-three, in 1817, he was already a leader in the new-founded *Blackwood's*. His first phase, the 'scorpion'-phase, lasted three or four years ; and his share in the attacks on Leigh Hunt, his blows rained on the *Edinburgh Review*, and on Whig complacencies and Whig conceptions of politics, religion, and literature, carry us back into a world of acrid jokes, high-blooded quarrels and sharp-edged censures, which are now spectral and mostly unrefreshing. The pointed, not underbred sketches of Edinburgh and Glasgow Life in his anonymous *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819), often keep their savour, and may rank beside the portraits of Carlyle for their freedom, and also for their elaborate and desperate efforts to describe heads and faces, in forestalment of Carlyle's way : a practice oddly marred by Lockhart's craze for 'craniology' and Spurzheim. Meantime he had met Scott, whose daughter he married : his next phase is that of a novelist ; and his four stories were all done before he was thirty : but unhappily he did not pursue his gifts in that line, or carry out his ambition to paint contemporary Scottish life thoroughly. From 1825, for more than a quarter of a century, he edited the *Quarterly Review* ; and in the work of his post, in its endless ephemeral imbroglios and diplomacies, and in his hundred articles, written mostly without a hope or wish for permanence, he would have squandered his fine talent, had it not found its highest scope in biography. His little *Life of Burns* (1828), and his enduring, his great, his incomparable *Life of Scott* (1836-8) rivet his position in English letters, while his scraps of original verse, and his *Ancient Spanish Ballads* (1823), attest a high poetic gift never duly realised. Lockhart's reserve and his sharpness caused his character to be long maligned ; but it has now been vindicated by a biographer who possessed, like Lockhart himself, the equity and temper of a Cavalier.

Lockhart's faculty, both critical and productive, was far greater than that of the other official reviewers. But it was only in biography that he did his utmost ; elsewhere he threw out brilliant, curious streamers, of which the light is not yet faded ; but they are buried now overmuch behind the cloud. In prose, his fundamental gift is not satire, as he gave some reason to think, but the power of describing real men, manners, physiognomies, and humours : less the gift of the imaginer

than of the observer and reporter. His mind and writing, his sarcasm, his pathos, are of the Latin cast, and in his best pages—the picture of the law courts in *Peter's Letters*, the deathbed of Scott, the Oxford scenes in *Reginald Dalton*, there is that which recalls the letters of Cicero or Pliny. His *Valerius*, a story of Roman luxury, pagan magic and Christian martyrdom, has the stamp of an elegant translation, a little cold in its high-wrought pathos, but with a quality of severe grace that forecasts the Roman colloquies, not yet (1821) written, of Landor. All this is different from the prose of the sloven Wilson or the butcher Gifford. It is true that in *Blackwood's* Lockhart played some bitter and excessive pranks, and was therefore credited with many others not his own: going farther in the direction of half-bred—though never vile—personalities than consisted with his really knightly nature. His attacks on Leigh Hunt, though not lacking warrant, were of this order; Jeffrey and his school Lockhart was only repaying in their own coin; it was a service, but it lowered Lockhart. Throughout he shares with Wilson the honour of being one of the first to uphold, against more than half the world and with reverent intelligence, the name of Wordsworth; whose attraction for a man of seemingly alien talent is a testimony to both. Indeed, everywhere in Lockhart we have the sense of something bigger than his set, bigger than his daily temper, struggling against his surroundings, his sardonic habit, and his deep-folded secretiveness. He has been called 'a true son of the Manse'; and there is truth in the phrase, for his best-known story, *Adam Blair* (1822), is the tragedy of a manse; is founded on real events, told him by his father the minister; and is informed by a strong, conventional, not very sound piety and morality, touched with charity. Adam Blair 'falls,' after a struggle, into a *liaison* with a married woman, is sorely punished, and comes back to his parish in humility to work out his disgrace, unfrocked and resolute, to be at last reinstated. But the son of the manse had also a poet's instinct for situation; the tale might have appealed to Wordsworth, but shows a far keener sense of human weakness than belonged to Wordsworth, and with more insight into passion, which is treated, indeed, with too much severity, but not more severely than the Scots would have treated it. An ideal of delicate simplicity and stern goodness hovered before Lockhart through his career as fighting contributor and able editor, and through the boisterous old Scottish scenes that he half-watched, half-shared. *Reginald Dalton* contains the best extant picture,

though a slightly overcharged one, of Oxford scenes and personages; the town and gown row, the wine-party, the hunt, the heads and tutors of colleges; but here also there is a quiet, idyllic corner, the household of the old Roman priest and the young, sweet heroine, to whom Dalton resorts in the pauses of his boyish rowdiness. In all this Wordsworth counted, and quotations from his verse come in loyally on many a page. The passionate piety and *desiderium* of the lines that Carlyle loved:

> Be constant to the dead;
> The dead cannot deceive,

reveal and attain the new poetic ideal of simplicity used in the service of grandeur.

Lockhart was also a romantic—half a romantic—as well in fiction as in poetry. In his neglected, unreprinted, ill-ordered story, *The History of Matthew Wald*, which Sir Walter Scott pronounced to be 'full of power, but disagreeable,' there are scenes, lively and veracious enough, of Scottish life; 'interiors' of the sordid, worldly manse, and of contrasted piety and humanity; the humours and talk of an old law lord; and plenty of the measured sarcasm that Lockhart by now (1824) had mastered. But there is an increased share of that power to imagine and word the inward misery of his hero, which he frequently commands. In *Matthew Wald* the attempt is ambitious, and the threads are complex. Matthew is ousted from his house, and parted from his love, who marries and is deserted by a worthless peer; he himself marries a good simple woman, who is distraught by Methodism—a creed here painted in bitter colours. He finds himself next door to the deserted wife, and is wrongly accused by her husband, whom he fights and kills. His own wife, who is with child, comes in on the pair, mistakes the situation, and dies. Matthew goes mad, but remembers and writes down some of his delirium; for he recovers, and takes his place in the world, and ends, to the outward eye, a genial old fellow enough. Sir Walter was shocked by the 'vile ending,' but the relentless temper of the tale was out of his range, and he never essayed any such tragedy, unless it were in *St. Ronan's Well*. His judgment, therefore, is really a self-criticism. It is true that Lockhart, here and elsewhere in his tragical passages, suffers from a certain superfetation, if the word may pass, of language; he does not move in tragedy with the ease of the masters who are 'native unto that element.' This may be set down as

the fate of the normally haughty, reticent writer, whom it costs too much to give his heart away: when the dam of reserve breaks down, the words, so unaccustomed, so reluctant, are apt to be overstrained and to defeat themselves. And no style, not even the comic, is so ephemeral as the tragical, unless it is quite right. But the power is there; we are not dealing with a Joanna Baillie. Thus Lockhart, in a deeper way than Scott, points forwards, and marks the confluence of the two streams of fiction that have here been traced: the positive or realistic which shows the whims and outer life of men, and the more inquisitive, sombre, and imaginative, with its outlets into the infinite of 'desires and dreams and fears.' But he did not give himself time to work for perfection in story-telling.

In his poetry, and often in his judgment of poets, he was also of the romantics. So near Scott, so deep in matters Spanish, so full of honour, breeding, and chivalrous punctilio, he could hardly be otherwise. His *Wandering Knight's Song*, if it has not a more consummate form than Scott's finer lyrics, has a more mediæval note of pure and centred ardour, and might have been owned by one of the 'Pre-Raphaelites':

> I ride from land to land,
> I sail from sea to sea:
> Some day more kind I fate may find,
> Some night kiss thee.

This is from the Spanish, and comes, like the almost equally beautiful serenade 'While my lady sleepeth,' in the *Ancient Spanish Ballads*, which contain Lockhart's best title-deeds, in popular esteem, to the name of poet; and it was certainly his instinct to put most of his intimate song into translation. The bits of Homer that he rendered in hexameters, and of Goethe's *Faust*, show the same preference, and also a noticeable even purity of execution. Coming between Scott and Macaulay, the *Spanish Ballads*, though long popular, have not held their ground as they should. They are mostly free translations of the assonant *romances* that he found in the contemporary German edition of Depping (1819), and are put into a variety of measures, preferably long alexandrines with a lilting extra syllable in the middle, or fourteen-syllabled lines broken by internal rhyme. He often fails in finish, but seldom in rush and swing or in gallantry of sound and diction. The spots and blemishes of conventional epithet or awkward phrase are forgotten, and the rapid careering lines remain

in the memory. *The Penitence of Don Roderick*, and *The Vengeance of Mudara* :

> 'Die, foeman to Sancha—die, traitor to Lara!'
> As he spake, there was blood on the spear of Mudara—

and *Count Alarcos and the Infanta Solisa*, and *The Song of the Galley* all bear the test and have original value as poems. Lockhart's notes on literary and other history have been at many points discounted by later scholarship ; but there is no doubt that he had a true vein of poetic affinity to the original ballad-makers. Some of his other verses, such as the perfect epitaph upon William Maginn, and the more rollicking elegy, *Captain Paton's Lament*, show a vein of talent that he hardly explored. He was also at home in the verse of Frere and Rose and Byron, the serio-comic octave stanza, as can be seen from his *Mad Banker of Amsterdam*, contributed to *Blackwood's*.

The *Life of Scott* (1837-8) owes much of its power to the harmony of opposites between the subject and the biographer. Scott was expansive, like a broad flood sparkling in the sunlight ; his instinct was for utterance ; and though he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve, he would, at any rate, talk to himself, as in his *Diary* he does ; and there he writes down, never thinking of the reader, all that he feels ; and stands that test. With Lockhart utterance is also necessary, but it is a pain, and he has left no diary. The charm is that of exploring a river that sinks at times out of sight. Scott's freedom of self-expression may well have been a wonder to Lockhart, and he makes full use of it in his *Life*, sure that he is never betraying his master, one of the fathers of his soul, in doing so. He also had that scholarly accuracy in particulars which was hardly the strength of Scott, a careful judgment in using what he had not known at first-hand, and a sure, minute, and unwarped skill in giving his personal memories. He had acquired, since his buccaneer days, discretion, fairness, and dignity. He was near enough to Scott as a Tory, a lover of tradition, a sportsman, a boon companion, a poet, and a novelist, to follow on his track without any touch of perfunctoriness in his sympathy. We do not feel that he is describing this poem, or that novel, because it comes into his task and has to be done. One cavalier understands another ; and latterly, at any rate, he watched Scott with love and anxiety, following every mood, and lapse, and painful and partial recovery. In all the dramatic scenes of Scott's life he shows the power, though he never falls into the risks, of the novelist. We do

not feel that the scene has been arranged in his fancy afterwards, and the values perverted in order to give a nobler effect than the truth. Nor has he ever, except once, been gravely attacked on the score of correctness; and the debate carried on by the Ballantyne firm over the financial ruin of Scott, and his and their share of responsibility for it, still leaves questions unsolved. Boswell's book is nearer to the eternal vulgar truth of things, and Scott said fewer of the words that bite deep, or carry far, than Johnson; and Boswell had less scruple in recording and prying, while Lockhart wrote under the laws that rule gentlemen, losing thereby, doubtless, many a point. His work produces less illusion of reality than Boswell's; but then Boswell's illusion implies the fallacy, from which Lockhart is free, namely, that his hero was the centre of contemporary literature and society; which is not really true of Johnson. Boswell's tone is that of one of a lower caste; Lockhart's modesty is unvarying, but he is speaking of a great man of his own caste. His work is first-rate, for his subject is given to him; he has not to fancy, but to re-create his story, and this is the mark of all the best he wrote.

One of the most lively and incessant of the free-lances in this age, a man of genuine but squandered wit and scholarship, was William Maginn [1] (1793-1842), who is now remembered less for anything he achieved than as the sitter for Thackeray's portrait of Captain Shandon. Maginn was for many years, from 1819 to about 1830, one of the lights of *Blackwood's*; he wrote sprightly verse and foaming prose in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*; he created a drunken, bragging, facetious rhyming personage, Ensign O'Doherty, on whom he fathered memoirs, maxims, anecdotes, and verses; mostly in a transient and crackling style of humour. He wrote parodies of Coleridge and a review of *Adonais*, each more disgusting than the other. He fired off all manner of burlesques, pasquinades, and indescribable tipsy sallies. He turned off Latin and Greek verse, chiefly by way of translation, with surprising facility, often vulgarising the originals. He produced a number of *Homeric Ballads*, translations from the Greek in ballad rhyme, which are hard to bear although Matthew Arnold praised them, and a few verses of which show something of a poet spoilt. Much of Maginn's work is tainted by vulgarity, but where that quality is inoffensive he is capable of excelling. Two of his tales or sketches, *Bob Burke's Duel with Ensign Brady*, and *A Story without a Tail*, are capital things of their sort, with not a little droll bragging and bacchanalian humour. What Maginn

might have done is best seen in his paper on *Farmer's Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, where he shows much learning and an impatient rough scholarly shrewdness. His article on Lady Macbeth is a specimen of his more serious appreciative power, and that on Byron's *Werner*, with its parallel passages from Miss Harriet Lee's *Kruitzner*, is not unfair in its severity. In 1830 Maginn became a main prop of *Fraser's Magazine*, then newly founded, and contributed profusely. His *Gallery of Literary Characters* did much for the vogue of the journal. Some of his reviews (especially a famous one, which led to a duel, of Grantley Berkeley's novel) suggest rather Mr. Bludyer than Captain Shandon ; they are in the robust old blackguarding style, soon to fall out of credit. There is not much satisfaction now to be got from reading Maginn ; the effect is that of the morning after the orgy, with the cards lying torn upon the floor, and the overturned tumblers littering the trays. We leave him, however, with some sense of pathos, and Lockhart's famous, compact, and kindly epitaph in verse is conclusive and almost sufficient.

The *Westminster Review*,[1] though it includes criticisms of poetry and fiction, stands, at least in its earlier years, further off from literature than any of its three great precursors. The organ of the utilitarian Radicals, manned by the two Mills, Austin and others, and partly edited at first by Bowring, its aims were in no sense æsthetic, and in its early articles[2] there is little authorcraft. An exception has to be made for John Mill, whose youthful essays already exhibit his peculiar transparency of style, together with his surface coldness and wilfully repressed enthusiasm. But in that temple of reason there is no altar to the graces. The writing of James Mill has the combination of dryness, fierceness, and precision in analysis, which made him so efficient a warrior. The purpose of the *Westminster* was threefold. There was first the desire to show up the Whigs. The Tories, or Conservatives (as Croker, in the year 1831, first styled them), were treated as comparatively honest foes, and their iniquities taken for granted. The articles (by James Mill) on the 'see-sawing,' the compromises, and the contradictions, of the *Edinburgh Review*, are bitterer than those on the *Quarterly*. One feature of the *Westminster* during its first years was this direct and formal criticism of its contemporaries. The picture of Jeffrey and Sydney Smith, throwing out a sop to the *philosophes* with one hand and to the 'aristocrats' with the other, and the attack on the Whig constitutional theory of the three estates,

are highly effective pieces of polemic in the frigid cutting style. The following passage reduces to a formula the difference between the two camps. The 'few' referred to are, of course, the Crown, the Lords, and the 'representatives':

> There is a theory that by creating three of these few, a security is obtained for the many by their opposition to one another. This is the theory of the balance; the balance in the British Constitution of King, Lords, and Commons. . . . Security, it is said, may be obtained for the many by the opposition of these few to one another. But we have still to ask, what security is there that they will oppose? . . . if it be possible for them to combine, all idea of security from the balance is chimerical and absurd. The Commons may either be a third few so constituted as to have a separate interest from the many, and to be as eager to obtain the profits of misrule as the other two. Or we may suppose that they are so constituted as to be a perfect organ for the many, and to have no purpose except that of preventing misrule . . . (1825).

The earlier philosophic radicals will often be found writing in this fashion, practising 'the mathematical plainness,' doggedly and verbally repeating their points, ruthlessly stripping and defining their terms. The younger Mill was to introduce a more popular and flexible mode of address. The second aim of the Westminster Reviewers was, of course, to use the weapons invented by the enemy, and discharge the Benthamite artillery quarterly. They applied the conceptions of their master to current problems, and at many points went beyond him. But they cherished also a third purpose, which may be described as that of obtaining publicity for philosophical ideas. Their faith in infinite, untrammelled, and purely reasonable discussion, as the true method at once of reaching the truth and moving the world, is inherited largely from the revolutionary thinkers, and finds classical expression afterwards in Mill's *Liberty*. Godwin had dreamed of a human society based on mutual persuasion and non-resistance, a society of pure intellects. The Mills thought of it rather as a lively and stubborn debating club, of which the object was not victory but the discovery of truth, which was to be thoroughly threshed out and then unanimously saluted. It is easy to mock at this idea; but mankind is such, that it will never be realised to excess; and those who proclaimed so dourly are to be held in honour. The fortunes of the *Review*, the effect of the discipline upon John Mill, and the revulsion that befell him, are told in his *Autobiography*. The full force of philosophic Radicalism is not felt till after 1830.

VI

The history of the periodical press, quarterly, weekly, daily, and monthly, in its bearing on the history of English culture, ought to be written, but cannot here be even indicated. Even the journals to which the greater critics and essayists, Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey, were contributors cannot be recounted. There would be much to say of the short-lived *London Magazine* (1820-9), in which all three figure, and which is still curious and excellent reading; of the still more ephemeral *Knight's Quarterly Magazine* (1823-4), which contains Macaulay's *Ivry* and *Naseby* and his *Dialogue between Mr. Cowley and Mr. Milton*; of the *New Monthly Magazine*, edited by Thomas Campbell (1820); not to mention *Fraser's*, which began in 1830, and the numerous ventures of Leigh Hunt, which will be referred to later (Ch. XIX.). A single instance may be given to show how the new press, after a fashion inconceivable forty years earlier, furnished men of letters with a livelihood, a sounding-board, and a public. The greatest importer and interpreter of Italian literature during this age was the exiled patriot and writer, Ugo Foscolo,[1] who passed the last eleven years of his life (1816-27) in England. His articles on the three great Florentines; on Michelangelo, Ariosto, and Tasso; and his surveys of Italian letters, reinforcing as they did the labours of Cary and of other scholars and translators, made an epoch in Italian studies, and many of them were retranslated into his own language. A man of difficult and improvident temper, but filled with the true flame of scholarship, Foscolo, though befriended by London Whig society, suffered much, and spent some time in a debtor's prison. His living he made through the Reviews, in which nearly all his work appeared. He wrote in the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly*, the *Westminster*, the *New Monthly*, the *European Review*, and the *Retrospective Review*—some five-and-twenty articles in all. Without them he could not have lived, or the work could not have been done.

The last-named of these journals claims especial praise, and its significance for our survey is more immediate. The renewed and impassioned study of our older writers, especially those of the Renaissance, from More down to Milton, rapidly increased, as succeeding chapters will show, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This interest affected not only scholarship and criticism but creative art. The cast of blank verse and lyric, the colour and idiom of prose, the mind

and temper of many choice spirits, were profoundly affected by it. There is no need to forestall what must be said in this connection of Coleridge, Shelley, Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Darley, Beddoes, and De Quincey. At the same time, despite the labours of Shakespeareans like Malone, of Todd the editor of Spenser, and of many more, the old material itself was hard of access, and what may be called the lesser great authors were often but dimly known. Indeed, they were only just beginning to be edited, reprinted, or comprehensively canvassed. The labours of Alexander Dyce over the Elizabethan playwrights first bore fruit in his editions of Peele (1827-8), of Webster (1830), and of Greene (1831). The organisation of English scholarship belongs to the next age. There had certainly been many pioneers. In 1787 Henry Headley,[1] who belonged to the group of Warton and Bowles, had published his *Select Beauties of English Poetry*, compiled with a learning and critical instinct that promised highly. An admirer of Drayton before Lamb and Southey, a discoverer of many rare and charming seventeenth-century lyrics, and well aware besides of the qualities of eighteenth-century verse, Headley was cut off too young, and must be honourably named. The development of this kind of study in the course of a generation may be measured by comparing his work with that of the *Retrospective Review* (1820-8).

That this magazine should last eight years was in itself a mark of requickened taste. The aim, announced in the first number, was 'to recall the public from an exclusive attention to new books by making the old ones the subject of critical discussion.' It was, perhaps, not strictly maintained; for the critical discussion, though sometimes excellent and never inept, is subordinate, inevitably, to the work of the explorer. To make known forgotten or inaccessible authors; to give long summaries, extracts, and illustrations of their works; —this task of disinterment and disclosure, relieved by pleasant and judicious praise, was methodically begun by the *Retrospective Review*.[2] The scope is by no means confined to 'Elizabethan,' or to English, literature. There are papers on 'modern books,' ranging from Beckford's *Lives of Extraordinary Painters* to Topham's *Life of Elwes*. The age of Shadwell and Butler, and that of Dennis and Cibber, are not forgotten. Articles are there on Spanish literature, on Ariosto, and on the *Moallakāt*. Still the main interest was in the writers between 1500 and 1660. Dramatists like Jonson and Tourneur, metaphysicians and fantasts like Donne and Browne and

Crashaw, romancers like Sidney, and the literature of the by-ways — *Lingua*, *Gondibert*, *Pharonnida* — were presented, often introduced, to the readers of the day. It seems that none of the greater critics wrote in this Review; but the scholarly and critical bent of the time can be all the better seen for that, and is worthily represented by Hartley Coleridge, Talfourd, Palgrave, and the editor, Henry Southern, who was afterwards joined by Sir Harris Nicolas. The articles, which are not signed, are on a notably high and even level of excellence, and many deserve reprinting; even if the style (our own vices being different) is sometimes too stiff and sometimes too florid for the modern taste. They are well worth saving from that 'inconceivable profundity of oblivion,' which Mr. Thomas Hardy tells us is the fate of dead cattle, and which has overtaken most of the periodical production of the time. But the volume of journalism, and the passion for writing on the sand, has swelled since 1830 beyond mortal reckoning.

NOTES

Among the histories and general surveys which I have found of most value, and my debt to which is not easy to particularise, are: C. H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth*; George Saintsbury, *Nineteenth Century Literature*, *A Short History of English Literature*, *Essays in English Literature*, and also *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*, and *A History of English Prosody*; Hugh Walker, *The Literature of the Victorian Era* (for the later writers, where the work of Prof. Walker and my own overlaps considerably); Thomas Seccombe, *The Age of Johnson* (for the earlier years); C. E. Vaughan, *The Romantic Revolt*, and T. S. Omond, *The Romantic Triumph* (in 'Periods of European Literature'); W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vols. v. and vi.; Arthur Symons, *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*; H. A. Beers's *History of English Romanticism in the XVIIIth Century*, and of *English Romanticism in the XIXth Century*; Chambers's *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, new edition; and many articles in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. To these and to many more writers I have tried to point out the more definite obligations in the following notes, which are meant simply to amplify, verify, and illustrate some points which it would have been cumbrous to dwell on in the text, and also to show what editions or commentaries have proved of most service. In a few cases reference is made at second hand to books (I believe all specified) and to editions that I have been unable to see. The bibliography of this period is so immense that no attempt has been made (save in a few instances for special reasons) to expand data of this kind. We still lack in England a proper *Grundriss* of our later literature. The bibliographies at the end of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* are helping to make good this want; and much may be looked for, in this respect as well as in all others, from the volume (not yet issued) on the 'romantic period.' Vol. viii. Ch. xxv. (by G. P. Gooch) of the *Camb. Modern History*, on 'Europe and the French Revolution' has been of special use to me for Ch. ix.; also vol. vi. Ch. xxiv., by C. E. Vaughan, 'The Romantic Movement in European Literature,' for Ch. i., etc. The two vols. (Halle, 1911 and 1912) entitled *Die Anfänge der Romantik*, by Helene Richter, I unfortunately did not see till my own were in type.

p. 12. **Natural History of Selborne.** First ed., 1789, four years before White's death. The letters begin in 1767, but are preceded by a more formal account (called *The Antiquities of Selborne*) of White's Hampshire village, where he lived long, and officiated as curate. There were six editions before 1830, and have been many since; see the bibliography at the end of Grant Allen's ed. (1900), which is useful for its scientific notes and occasional corrections. White's *Life and Letters*, ed. Rashleigh Holt-White, appeared in 1901. See the full art. in *D. N. B.*, by A. Newton.

p. 14, note 1. **Dugald Stewart.** *Works*, ed. Hamilton (1877), v. 224-36 (essay *On the Beautiful*), and pp. 438-41 (Notes U and X). Stewart criticises Sir Uvedale Price for severing the conceptions of the beautiful and picturesque, and also his definitions of each. 'The Sublime and the Picturesque are qualifying

epithets, to limit the meaning of the generic name Beauty, in particular instances.' Stewart holds that the two must unite, for landscape painting 'to produce its highest effect'; and introduces into the notion of the picturesque that of *suggestion*; it sets the fancy at work, and thus beauties not shown are 'supplied or understood.' Here we approach the contemporary idea of the 'romantic'; 'a ruined abbey or castle employed to awaken the memory of former times,' etc. See *ante* upon *Waverley*, Ch. xi. Also the *New English Dictionary*, *s.v.* 'picturesque'; North, in his *Examen* (1734), uses the term of writing, and Jortin (1758) of conversation. Pope earlier, in a note to the Tenth Iliad, employs it of landscape; 'the marshy spot of ground,' and the 'reeds that are heaped together to mark the place,' are 'circumstances of most picturesque imagination.'

p. 14, note 2. **Alison's Essays.** The following references (from sixth and enlarged ed., 2 vols., 1825) will illustrate the text: i. 75, analysis of 'ideas of emotion,' which furnish the needful 'train of thought' to the imagination; i. 132, distinction of painting from poetry (seemingly in ignorance of Lessing); i. 161, the 'emotion of taste' defined, and i. 171-2; i. 345, 'no form is peculiarly or solely beautiful' (in contradiction to Hogarth); ii. 200, the kinds of 'natural motion' which are, or are not, 'beautiful' and 'sublime.'

p. 16, note 1. **'must move us.'** I borrow this phrase from a well-known page of Matthew Arnold in his paper 'A French Critic on Milton.'

p. 16, note 2. **Twining.** His ed. of the *Poetics* appeared 1789. See his first dissertation, 'On Poetry,' and especially the pages on 'representative metre.'

p. 17, note 1. **with painters.** From Twining's *Correspondence*, entitled *Recreations of a Country Clergyman of the Eighteenth Century* (1882), pp. 101-2; and for next extract, p. 178; all italics in text mine.

p. 17, note 2. **tourists.** *E.g.* in Samuel Derrick's *Letters written from Leverpoole, Chester, Corke, The Lake of Killarney*, etc. (2 vols., 1767), i. 92-128, there is an enthusiastic description of the Killarney country, dated 1760. P. 101: 'I cannot but say it was pleasant to see, on one hand, the showers posting round the borders of the mountains, upborne by the wings of the wind; while, on the other, a variety of beautiful rainbows danced before us, the extremities of which were within pistol-shot.' P. 108: 'On one hand, Mangertogh, and other mountains, that lift their tops to the skies, and, giant-like, seem to threaten the scaling of heaven, rise awful from the verge of the lake; in some places white, bald, and naked, as if nature had stripped them of their ornaments; in others, crowned with flourishing trees, etc.'

p. 17, note 3. **Sir U. Price.** I have used the 1842 ed. (Sir T. D. Lauder's). The definitions are on p. 78 foll., p. 460 foll.; the passages quoted, on p. 462 foll. Thomas Whately, in his *Observations on Modern Gardening* (third ed., 1771), pp. 146-50, protests against the limitations of a picture being extended to a garden; 'a tree which presents one rich mass of foliage has sometimes a fine effect in nature, but in painting is often a heavy lump,' etc. Alison often cites Whately, who applies ideas similar to Gilpin's in a business-like way. See too Sir W. Scott on 'Landscape Gardening' in *Quart. Rev.*, March 1828; *Misc. Prose* (1878), ii. 774 foll.

p. 22. **Goethe.** See *Aus meinem Leben*, bk. xiii., for the effect of English literature of the century upon the companions of his youth, and its affinity with their 'Lebensüberdruss.' Goethe writes in retrospect, but clearly means that

the melancholy impression given by Gray, Young, Ossian, etc., was a truthful one, though exaggerated by the mood of those who received it. His well-known praise of *The Vicar of Wakefield* (*ib.*, bk. x.) may be set off against such reflections.

p. 24, note 1. **first version of the Critique.** By Francis Haywood (1838). Two volumes, however, of his *Essays and Treatises* appeared in English in 1798, and one of the *Metaphysical Works* (by John Richardson) in 1836. The latter included the *Logic*, the *Prolegomena to future Metaphysics*, and *Inquiry into the Proofs for the Existence of God.* I have not seen any of these translations ; the references are from Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy*, Eng. tr. (1876), ii. 138-9.

p. 24, note 2. **Schopenhauer.** The story is told by W. Wallace, *Schopenhauer* (1890), pp. 161-3 ; the proposal was made (in vain) to Thomas Campbell by Schopenhauer in 1831 ; and in 1829 he had corresponded with the Francis Haywood named above, who was actually to do the work.

p. 30. **sickbed of the old classical school.** See Courthope, *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, vol. vi. ch. iii., 'Exhaustion of the Classical Influence in English Poetry,' and, for Rogers and Campbell, *ib.*, ch. v., 'The New Whigs.' Dr. Courthope's study of these writers, as reflecting various tendencies in the national life and in the conflict of parties, is original and enlightening, and leads him to a fuller treatment of figures like Mathias and Gifford than is here demanded.

p. 32. **The Rolliad.** For the authors and their several shares see *N. & Q.*, 1st series, vols. ii. and iii. There is a good brief account in Chambers's *Cyclop. of Eng. Lit.* (1902), ii. 669-72 ; and see too Saintsbury, *Political Verse* (1891), pp. 100-11, and Introduction ; and C. W. Previté-Orton, *Political Satire in English Poetry* (1910), p. 138 foll., an essay worth consulting on the whole subject.

p. 33. '**Peter Pindar.**' First collected ed., 1788 ; fourth (not wholly complete, 5 vols.), 1812.

p. 35, note 1. **so-called 'Della Cruscan.'** So-called, because their quarters were at Florence, the home of the famous 'Accademia della Crusca,' and one of them, Robert Merry, used the signature. 'Crusca,' 'bran, refuse,' is a sufficient title. They published in works like *The World* and *The Oracle.* Another of them was Edward Jerningham, author of *Il Latte*, a poem in praise of mothers who nurse their own infants. For all this see the pleasant account in Courthope, vi. 40-47 ; and the *Poet. Works* (3 vols., 1806) of Mary Robinson. These are worthless but typical ; the very exemplar of the silliness that Gifford derided, but also containing imitations of Wordsworth's more infantine ballads, and an address to Coleridge's baby. The volumes were posthumous ; it is curious to see the signatures both of Wolcot and Coleridge to the 'tributary verses.'

p. 35, note 2. **Samuel Rogers.** See P. W. Clayden, *Early Life of S. R.*, p. 162 foll. The time is April 1791, the speakers old Mackenzie (of the *Man of Feeling*), Miss Baillie, Dr. Moore (of *Zeluco*), Messrs. Merry, Jerningham, and others. 'What a beautiful expression is that of Paine !' said Mr. Merry. . . . [*i.e.*] 'We have dropped our baby-clothes and breeched ourselves in manhood.' 'Beautiful' gives the Della Cruscan note better than anything cited by Gifford.

p. 35, note 3. **Helen Maria Williams** (1762-1827), versifier, hymnodist, Girondist, radical, writer on the state of France, and Bohemian.

p. 35, note 4. **Gifford's two satires.** The *Baviad* is reprinted in H. Morley's *Shorter Eng. Poems* (n.d.), pp. 413-6, with some of Gifford's Bludyer-like notes.

p. 37, note 1. **Mathias.** For a full account see Courthope, vol. vi. ch. vi., 'Anti-Jacobinism in Eng. Poetry,' pp. 127-32; to these pages my text is in debt at several points. The passages from Mathias's preface, quoted by Mr. Courthope, show how seriously he took himself. The last edition came out in 1812, apparently.

p. 37, note 2. **anthology.** *Componimenti lirici de' più illustri poeti d'Italia* (3 vols., London, 1802). See the art. by W. P. Courtney in *Dict. Nat. Biog.* for list of replies to the *Pursuits*, and remarks on Mathias as an Italian scholar, the best in England 'since the time of Milton.' He edited Gravina, Menzini, and other authors, and translated many English works into Italian.

p. 38. **The Anti-Jacobin.** The standard edition of the poetry is by C. Edmonds (3rd ed., 1890), who adds valuable notes. The chief authority for the assignment of authors is Canning's marked copy of the poetry, but it is stated that the habit of the conspirators was for one of them to draft a poem, which 'was generally left open upon the table' for additions and changes by others; the remarkable unity of temper and impetus in the whole venture would thus be well accounted for; Edmonds, preface (ed. 1854), p. xvi. The 'Pitt stanza' ('Sun, moon') does not appear in the original sheet, No. 30, June 4, 1798. See too *N. and Q.*, 1st series, iii. 348-9, 431.

p. 39. **Charles Lamb.** Lamb suffered inclusion merely on the strength of having contributed verses to Coleridge's youthful *Poems* of 1796, etc.

p. 40. **The Rovers.** A scene from this play was acted at Eton, the school of Canning and Frere, in 1898, according to Gabrielle Festing, *J. H. Frere and his Friends* (1899), p. 30, a work containing a number of noticeable letters from Canning, Lady Erroll (whom Frere married), Gabriele Rossetti, and Frere himself. See Ch. XVII. *post*, on Frere.

p. 41, note 1. **The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, 1798-1821.** Inconceivably virulent and dull, so far as I have tested it. The reviewing is of the meanest order (see *e.g.* that of *Waverley*, xlvii. 217). None of the brilliant band of *The Anti-Jacobin* seem to have contributed. The editor was John Gifford (*q.v.* in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*), unrelated to William Gifford, and a regular government writer. His aim, however, is to carry on the campaign of Canning and Frere. There is some curious doggerel called *The Anarchists* (i. 366), in which the assault on 'Coleridge, Southey, Lloyd, and Lamb' is renewed, and Coleridge's *Lines to a Young Ass* are again ridiculed (see his *Poet. Works*, ed. Dykes Campbell, p. 477). Gillray's caricature in No. 1 portraying the worshippers of Lepaux, and representing (with purely imaginary features) Coleridge and Southey, Lloyd and Lamb (the two latter under the guise of toad and frog), is reproduced by E. V. Lucas, *Life of Charles Lamb*, i. 136-7.

p. 41, note 2. **admired by Horace Walpole.** See his letter to Mary Berry, April 28, 1789: 'all, all, all, is the most lovely poetry. And then one sighs that such profusion of poetry, magnificent and tender, should be thrown away on what neither interests nor instructs, and, with all the pains the notes take to explain, is scarce intelligible.' In her reply Mary Berry says that she 'was early initiated into all

the amours and loose manners of the plants,' etc.—a vein of banter which meets Walpole half way (*Extracts from the Journals and Corresp. of Miss Berry*, ed. Lady T. Lewis (1865), i. 162-3). Elsewhere Walpole dauntlessly couples Darwin's poem with the *Arabian Nights* and King's College Chapel as 'above all rules'; and he is not posing, he means these things—that is his charm.

p. 41, note 3. **Charles Darwin.** See *The Life of Erasmus Darwin*, by Charles Darwin, being an 'introduction' to an essay on his scientific works, by Ernst Krause, trans. from the German by W. S. Dallas (1879). Miss Seward's *Memoirs of E. D.* (1804) are severely censured for inaccuracy and spite by Charles Darwin. Krause brings out strikingly some of the anticipations of the younger by the elder biologist.

p. 44. **George Crabbe.** The edition by Crabbe's son, 8 vols., 1834, contains in vol. i. the biography, and though incomplete is still the pleasantest form for the reader. (Reprinted all in one vol., 1901.) More material, however, has been found, and other MSS. than those which Crabbe the younger used. The Cambridge ed. of the *Poetical Works* (3 vols., 1905-7), by A. W. Ward, is exhaustive and precise; and there is a convenient one-vol. edition by A. J. and R. M. Carlyle, less complete (Oxford, 1908). M. René Huchon published in a monograph (translated in 1907 by F. Clarke) *George Crabbe and his Times*, a work as faithful and thoroughgoing as *The Borough* itself, and embodying much new biographical material and illustration, as well as many abstracts of the poems and keen critical observations (the references in following notes are to the translation). *Readings in Crabbe* (*Tales of the Hall*), by E. FitzGerald (1882); *Selections*, by Bernard Holland (1899), and C. H. Herford (1902).

p. 45, note 1. **Burke, nobly, launched him.** The story is told in the *Life of Crabbe*, ch. iv. It does honour to both men and to their demeanour, as well as to the delicate generosity of Burke towards an unknown aspirant. There is no finer private action recorded to the credit of any 'patron' in the history of English literature. Crabbe's letter to Burke is given in full by his son, and is an excellent example of his prose manner. For facsimile see Huchon, p. 112; and *id.*, App. I., pp. 493-8, for text of his highly characteristic third letter to Burke. The verses on the swallows, which satisfied Burke that he was a poet, are in *The Village*, book i., 'As on the neighbouring beach,' etc.

p. 45, note 2. **Johnson read him 'with delight.'** *Life*, ch. v. The words come in a letter from Johnson to Reynolds, March 4, 1783, in which he encloses his emendations to *The Village*. One of these Boswell quotes, from the overture to the poem, which Crabbe adopted. For the paviour's thud of Crabbe's original verse—

> But, charm'd by him, or smitten with his views,
> Shall modern poets court the Mantuan Muse?

Johnson has substituted his own heavily swung, but deep and musical blow upon the iron—

> Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
> Mechanick echoes of the Mantuan song?

The whole difference between the couplet of 1748 and that of 1783 is here.

p. 48. **the taste for . . . Mrs. Radcliffe.** *Borough*, xx., and Huchon, pp. 257-8.

p. 49. **Giant Hickerthrift.** See Huchon, pp. 24, 29, 40-42, for Crabbe's early reading. This kind of pasture lasted long. See Samuel Bamford's *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (ed. Dunckley, 1893, i. 87), ch. viii.

The young boy's literature was *Robinson Crusoe*, *Jack the Giant-Killer*, *Saint George and the Dragon*, *Tom Hickathrift*, *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, etc., besides the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*. This was in the early days of the century, in a simple Lancashire Nonconformist home. There were also 'Robin Hood's Songs' and *Chevy Chase*.

p. 54. **perhaps to exaggerate.** For cases, see Huchon, pp. 309-10 (note).

p. 61. **rhetorical associations.** For analysis of language and metre, see Huchon, pp. 483-8.

p. 65. **Rogers.** *Poet. Works* in 'Aldine' ed. (E. Bell, 1831). See P. W. Clayden, *Early Life of S. R.* (1887), and *Rogers and his Contemporaries* (2 vols., 1889).

p. 67. **the Gordon riots**, etc. Clayden, *Early Life*, p. 38. For Parr's letter, pp. 220-33; and for a much better one from W. Gilpin (on *The Pleasures of Memory*), pp. 358-60.

p. 68. **Thomas Campbell.** *Complete Works*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (1908); *Poet. Works*, ed. W. A. Hill (1875), with memoir by W. Allingham. *Life and Letters*, ed. W. Beattie (3 vols., 1848-50).

p. 70, note 1. **Bowles on Pope.** The dispute is summarised in Byron's *Letters and Journals* (ed. R. E. Prothero, 1901), vol. v. (App. III.), p. 522 foll., where Bowles's *Invariable Principles* and Byron's two letters are reprinted. The *Principles* appeared again in *Two Letters to the Right Hon. Lord Byron*. Byron's first tract, *A Letter* [to John Murray] *in reference to W. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope*, appeared in 1821; the other letter not till 1835. Bowles also wrote (see Prothero, *op. cit.*) his reply to a Quarterly Reviewer, whom he wrongly thought to be Octavius Gilchrist. Some of the original articles in the controversy are reprinted by E. Rhys, *Literary Pamphlets* (1897), vol. ii. See too Saintsbury, *Hist. of Criticism*, iii. 279-82, for a review of the case, and for the gospel of Execution.

p. 70, note 2. **crudely stated issue.** See Byron's remarks in his first letter: 'To the question, "whether the description of a game of cards be as poetical, supposing the execution of the artists equal, as a description of a walk in a forest?" it may be answered, that the *materials* certainly are not equal; but that "the *artist*," who has rendered the "game of cards poetical," is "*by far the greater* of the two." But all this "ordering" of poets is purely arbitrary on the part of Mr. Bowles. There may or may not be, in fact, different "orders" of poetry, but the poet is always ranked according to his execution, and not according to his branch of the art. . . . Away then with this cant about "nature" and "invariable principles of poetry"! A great artist will make a block of stone as sublime as a mountain, and a good poet can imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America.'

p. 72. **the sonnet.** See Dyce, *Specimens of Eng. Sonnets* (1833); Southey, *Specimens of the Later Eng. Poets* (3 vols., 1807). For Bampfylde, see Dyce, pp. 140-50, and also Sir Egerton Brydges, *Autobiography* (1834), ii. 257-62 (Southey's letters on Bampfylde), and i. 35. Brydges's own sonnets are freely sprinkled through this work, and I have seen his *Sonnets and other Poems* (ed. 1785), which includes a 'Versification of the Six Bards of Ossian.' Warton's sonnets are in Chalmers, vol. xviii. Bowles altered the text of his sonnets a good deal in successive reprints. I have seen the fourth edition (1796), the seventh (1800-1), and the eighth (1802). His numerous metrical schemes include

(beside that named in text) *abba cddc efefef* and *abba cddc efefgg*; these are mostly unlucky. See Schipper, *Neuenglische Metrik* (Bonn, 1888), ii. 867. For the poet's position, see 'W. L. Bowles,' by T. E. Casson, in *Eighteenth Century Literature: an Oxford Miscellany* (1909), pp. 151-83.

p. 76. **William Cowper.** Southey's ed. of the *Life and Works* (15 vols., 1836-7) is still the best Cowper library. It includes text of Cowper's *Memoir* and *Adelphi* and many letters; but the *Correspondence*, edited by T. Wright (4 vols., 1904), in chronological order, supersedes Grimshawe's, Southey's, and other collections, though further letters have been printed by J. C. Bailey in his ed. of the *Poetical Works* (1905), containing all the verse but the *Homer*, and an admirable introduction and notes. There are various other editions of the poems; by W. Benham ('Globe,' 1870, etc.), by J. Bruce ('Aldine'), and by H. S. Milford (1911). Out of many studies may be singled those of Sainte-Beuve, in *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. xi. (1868); by W. Bagehot, in *Literary Studies* (ed. 1898, vol. i.); by Goldwin Smith, *Cowper* (1880); and by Sir Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, vol. ii. There is a *Concordance* by J. Neve (1887). Hayley's *Life* (1803) was the first. There are many selections from the *Letters*, *e.g.* by J. G. Frazer (new ed., 2 vols., 1912).

p. 79. **Mr. Cox.** *Corresp.* (ed. Wright), iii. 183-4, Nov. 27, 1787.

p. 81, note 1. **the dream.** *Corresp.*, i. 132-4.

p. 81, note 2. **the hares.** *Gent. Mag.*, liv. 412 (June 1784): 'Unnoticed properties of that little animal the Hare,' signed 'W. C.'

p. 82, note 1. **Newton.** J. Bull, the editor of Newton's *Autobiography* (Rel. Tract Soc., n.d., pp. 187-192), tries to plead for the beneficence of his influence upon Cowper, urging the comfort that Cowper's religion was to him in bereavement, and the geniality, humour, etc., of Newton. In equity, this plea must not be neglected. Cowper was in part enlisted through his affections, and religion at times consoled him. But it was its own terrors which it slightly mitigated; and on the whole Newton was poison to him.

p. 82, note 2. **the old faith.** I find I have unawares recalled and built on a passage in Sainte-Beuve's famous *Causerie* on Cowper. See note *supra* to p. 76.

p. 84. **'insane in substance.'** *Poet. Works*, ed. Bailey, p. xxix.

p. 85. **simplicity.** See *Corresp.*, ii. 129-30, Nov. 24, 1783; ii. 63, May 5, 1783; and ii. 86, July 27, 1783, for Cowper's dislike of Gibbon's and Robertson's prose.

p. 86. **paper on Pope's** *Homer.* In *Gent. Mag.*, lv. 610-13, Aug. 1775, signed 'Alethes.'

p. 88. **letter to Lady Hesketh.** *Corresp.*, i. 84-7, Jan. 30, 1767.

p. 93. **Blake's drawing of the 'weather-house.'** Reproduced in Cowper's *Poet. Works*, ed. Bailey, p. 254.

p. 95. **Crowe's** *Lewesdon Hill and other Poems.* First ed., 1788; 1827 ed. (whence quotation in text), 'corrected and much enlarged.' Crowe names in his notes (1788) the passages in Æschylus he had imitated; a somewhat early bit of Hellenism. One epigram on the 'critic's pruning-knife' may be saved:

> Well did it wear; and might have worn
> Full many an age, yet ne'er the worse;
> Till Bentley's hand its edge did turn
> On Milton's adamantine verse.

The work does not seem to have been reprinted.

p. 96. **translations of Homer.** See *Corresp.*, iii. 203-4, on the accuracy of the version; iii. 446, on the style; iv. 109, for discussion with Thurlow on rhyme; iv. 484, an important passage on the principles of translation.

p. 98. **Milton came in a dream.** *Corresp.*, iv. 373, Feb. 24, 1793.

p. 100. **Robert Burns.** For text I have used the 'Centenary' ed. by W. E. Henley and T. F. Henderson (4 vols., 1896-7). See too the ed. by A. Lang and W. A. Craigie (1896); and, amongst the other editions, that of Scott Douglas (6 vols., 1877-9) and that of C. A. Aitken (Aldine, 3 vols., 1893). Robert Chambers's *Life and Works of R. B.*, with the poems inserted in order of date, was practically rewritten by W. Wallace (4 vols., 1896), and in this form is most valuable. Mr. Wallace has also edited fully, in *Burns and Mrs. Dunlop* (1898), the correspondence of the two. Of biographies, Lockhart's *Life* (1828, re-ed. by J. H. Ingram, 1890) and J. C. Shairp's (1879, in 'Eng. Men of Letters') may be named here; and, of the endless studies and valuations, Carlyle's review of Lockhart (1828), reprinted in *Misc. Essays*; Henley's article in the 'Centenary' ed. (also separably published as *Life, Genius, Achievement of Robert Burns*); J. Nichol's art. in *Ency. Brit.*, ninth and eleventh editions; R. L. Stevenson, in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882). The exhaustive study by A. Angellier, *R. B., La Vie et les Oeuvres* (2 vols., Paris, 1898), is of much value. See also W. A. Craigie, *A Primer of Burns* (1896), for the facts marshalled. For more, see *Ency. Brit.* (eleventh ed.), *s.v.* 'Burns.'

p. 102, note 1. **Crabbe . . . honoured Burns.** See his *Life*, by his son, in *Works* (1834), i. 172.

p. 102, note 2. **a French scholar.** Angellier, *R. B.*, i. 17, 20-21.

p. 108, note 1. **'il est passionné, non romanesque.'** See, on Burns's treatment of love, Angellier, ii. 238-313.

p. 108, note 2. **hoisting his red flag.** See Wallace-Chambers, iii. 373-81.

p. 109. **the 'New Lights.'** For Burns's religious and ecclesiastical sympathies see especially *The Holy Fair*, *The Twa Herds*, and *Holy Willie's Prayer*; also *The Ordination*; and notably *The Kirk's Alarm*, for its wild derision of the 'alarm' excited by the supposed Socinian views of William M'Gill; and the notes of Henley and Henderson to all these pieces. See further Wallace-Chambers, i. 166-72, and i. 455-62, App. II., on 'Religious and Theological Writings which influenced Burns'; here is given the text of William Burnes's *Manual of Religious Belief*, and a reference to John Taylor's *Doctrine of Original Sin* (1740), which was known to Robert. He also read the sermons of Samuel Bourn, the Norwich Arian, at the instance of Mrs. Dunlop, and admired them much; see Wallace, *Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, pp. 284-5; and the note of J. Hay Colligan (in the *Glasgow Herald*, Jan. 25, 1912), who draws attention to Bourn, to Burns's Arian proclivities and utterances, and to his devotional strain in general.

p. 110. **metrical scholars.** Especially Henley and Henderson. See i. 336-341, on the six-line stave ('Burns put it to all manner of uses, and informed it with all manner of sentiments,' etc.; the history is carefully described from Provençal onwards); i. 328-30, on the measure of *The Holy Fair* (eight lines plus 'bob-wheel'); and i. 366-8, on that of the *Epistle to Davie* (fourteen lines, of which the last four form a tag in *rime coüée*). See too Saintsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Prosody*, iii. 4-8, not least the remarks on Burns's use of anapæst for iamb in the first foot of the 'three-foot iambic' ('like a rogue | for for|gerie').

p. 112. **The Jolly Beggars.** Scott's praise of this occurs in his *Quarterly* review (*Misc. Prose*, 1878, ii. 847) of Cromek's *Reliques of R. B.* (1808). Cromek printed the poem, which Currie had not done.

p. 121. **a few distinctive examples** (of the songs). The data I quote are all given by Henley and Henderson, vol. iv., in the notes on the respective songs ; the examples could be multiplied tenfold.

p. 128. **other vernacular Scottish poets.** Few have been re-edited, and the early editions are often rare. The amplest selection, though not a very critical one, is that of C. Rogers, *The Modern Scottish Minstrel* (6 vols., 1855-7), where all those named in text and many more may be found. J. Grant Wilson, *The Poets and Poetry of Scotland* (two series, 1876 and 1877), is also comprehensive and useful. See too Sarah Tytler and J. L. Watson, *The Songstresses of Scotland* (2 vols., 1871), and a brief but tasteful anthology, *The Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse* (1910), by MacNeile Dixon. G. F. Graham, *Songs of Scotland* (1848, 3 vols.), gives tunes and many interesting notes, and a list (vol. i. pp. v-vi) of the early collections of melodies. See further Chambers, *Cyclop. of Eng. Lit.* (new ed., 1902, ii. 795-832), for 'Scottish Vernacular Poets under George III.,' with many extracts. J. Veitch, *Hist. and Poetry of the Scottish Border* (new ed., 2 vols., 1893) last chapter.

p. 129, note 1. **Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.** See Rogers, i. 48, 210, for the Duke of Gordon's and Lady Nairne's versions, and Grant Wilson, i. 402, for that of William Reid (1764-1831). For Burns and the Duke, see Wallace-Chambers, ii. 201-3.

p. 129, note 2. **The Siller Gun.** See Rogers, i. 108, who states that twelve stanzas came first, in 1777, and then were in 1779 expanded to two cantos, and these to three in 1780, to four in 1808, and to five in 1836. Mayne is certainly one of the best manipulators of the metre in its more rapid and lively motions. The first canto is given by Grant Wilson, i. 375-8.

p. 130. **Lady Nairne.** C. Rogers, *Life and Songs of the Baroness Nairne, with Memoir* (1869).

p. 131, note 1. **John Skinner.** He was born in 1721, and is said to have written *Tullochgorum*, *John of Badenyon*, and *Ewie with the Crookit Horn*, early in life. The last-named is a precursor, and by no means a faint one, of Burns's *Poor Mailie*, and has some of the same true but not too serious pathos—affection kept sound by country common sense. See Rogers, i. 11-34.

p. 131, note 2. **Sir A. Boswell.** *Poet. Works*, ed. R. Howie Smith (1871), contains a note by Maidment of the vols. of older English poetry printed privately at Boswell's Auchinleck Press—an early example of such enterprise (pp. lxiii-lxviii). They include *The Buke of Ye Chess*, *A Fig for Momus*, etc. The printing is clear and fine. Boswell's own verses (*e.g. Clan-Alpin's Vow*) are largely in the following of Scott, but his best things are in the popular style. See Grant Wilson, i. 529 foll., and Rogers, ii. 204 foll.

p. 131, note 3. **the rest.** Here is a brief enough 'treasury': (1) Verse of the lively, homely kind, inclining to the boisterous. James Nicol, *Haluckit* [crazy] *Meg*, in his *Poems* (1805). Robert Lochore (*Tales in Rhyme*, 1815), *Walter's Waddin'*, a sprightly following of Burns's *Halloween*. Mrs. Elizabeth Grant of Carron, *Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch* ; see Rogers, i. 526. (2) Domestic and idyllic. Andrew Scott, *Rural Content, or the Muirland Farmer* ; in Grant Wilson, i. 345. Fergusson, *The Farmer's Ingle*. Lochore, *A Kintra Court-*

ship. (3) Love-lyrics, either gay and affectionate or sorrowful and charged with *desiderium.* Susanna Blamire, 1747-94, 'What ails this heart o' mine?' She was a Cumbrian, and wrote also in her own dialect, but this and other delicate lyrics are in Scots. W. Reid, *The Lea-rig* (first two stanzas by Fergusson; see Grant Wilson, i. 402 note). Richard Gall, 'My only jo and dearie, O!'; Grant Wilson, i. 552. (4) Jacobite verses; see *e.g.* Hogg, *Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (2 vols., 1819-21); perhaps the best known in 'O where, tell me where,' by Mrs. Anne Grant of Laggan (died 1838).

p. 131, note 4. **Hector MacNeill.** *Poet. Works* (2 vols., 1801; author's last ed., 1812).

p. 133, note 1. **what he really collected.** See D. Hogg, *Life of A. C.* (1875). Some of the authorities that Cunningham caused Cromek to cite are circumstantial enough; for instance, 'Gane were but the winter cauld,' is 'recovered by Miss C. Macartney.' Moreover, some pieces, such as *The Broken Heart of Annie*, are quite different in the *Remains* and in the *Twenty Songs*, so that the confusion is deepened. See J. A. Farrer, *Literary Forgeries* (1907), pp. 261-4. A previous vol. of *Songs* was published by Cunningham in 1813.

p. 133, note 2. **Songs of Scotland.** These appeared in 4 vols. (1825), and the selection ranges from James v. down to Cunningham's contemporaries, on whom he is often severe, in heavy pseudo-Johnsonian style. Of Robert Gall, the harmless and pleasant lyrist, he writes, 'He can see, but he cannot imagine'; but he is not amiss when he blames Hector MacNeill for an occasional false simplicity that touches the grotesque. His verdict on Tannahill is chary enough:—'His songs . . . are chiefly remarkable for the nicety and skill with which they are measured out to re-echo the airs to which they are sung' (i. 237, etc.).

p. 133, note 3. **Robert Tannahill.** I have used *Poems and Songs, chiefly in the Scotish Dialect* (1817). There is an ed., with memoir and notes, by D. Semple (Paisley, 1876), which gives the 'Centenary' proceedings of 1874.

p. 136. **Maggie Lauder.** This old poem, assigned (by family tradition) to Francis Semple of Beltrees (died 1682), is given (*e.g.*) by MacNeile Dixon, *Edin. Book of Scottish Verse*, No. 114, and by Graham, *Songs of Scotland*, ii. 111 (with air).

p. 137. **William Blake.** Messrs. E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats's ed. of the *Works* (3 vols. 1893), contains a memoir, a text which is nearly complete, lithographed facsimiles of the Prophetic Books, a transcript of Blake's notes on Reynolds, etc.; and a long and elaborate private interpretation of the symbolism, more difficult than Blake's own utterances. Of the poems (as distinct from Prophetic Books), this and all other texts were erroneous, and were antiquated by Dr. John Sampson's definitive edition (Oxford, 1905), which does not include the Prophetic Books. Dr. Sampson's text, alone, is reprinted in a smaller form (Oxford, 1906), with essay by Sir W. Raleigh. The Prophetic Books are only given fully in ordinary type by E. J. Ellis, *Poetical Works of W. B.* (2 vols., 1906). Separate coloured facsimiles of several by W. Muir, various dates. Printed texts of *Jerusalem* (1903) and of *Milton* (1907) by A. G. B. Russell and E. H. D. Maclagan, with expositions. Alexander Gilchrist's *Life* (2 vols., 1863, 1880, 1906) includes most of the poems, as edited at discretion by D. G. Rossetti; a most valuable list by W. M. Rossetti of Blake's artistic productions, and many plates and pictures. There

are many selections: *e.g.* by R. H. Shepherd (1874), W. M. Rossetti (1874), W. B. Yeats (1893), L. Housman (1893). A. G. B. Russell, *Letters of W. B.* (1906), includes the *Life* by Tatham. The other early notices of the poet are reprinted in Arthur Symons, *W. B.* (1907), the best brief criticism and memoir. Amongst noteworthy comments and elucidations, not named above, are, above all, Swinburne's *W. B., A Critical Essay* (1868 and 1906); James Thomson's article, appended to his *Shelley* (1884); those of W. B. Yeats, *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903); R. Kassner, *Die Mystik, die Künstler, und das Leben* (Leipzig, 1900), pp. 14-57; and E. Garnett, in *The Portfolio* (1895). I have used freely the elaborate study of P. Berger, *W. B., Mysticisme et Poésie* (1907), especially in reference to the Prophetic Books. See also B. de Selincourt, *W. B.*, 1909. My debts to this literature, especially to Sampson's ed., to Swinburne, and to Berger and Symons, are too great to specify fully.

p. 139. **Blake at Felpham.** See *Letters*, ed. Russell, pp. 75, 76-84, 108-12, etc.; and poems (in letters) extracted by Sampson, pp. 301-11.

p. 141, note 1. **reading of Swedenborg.** See note *post* to p. 151.

p. 141, note 2. **all seen.** See Berger, *W. B.*, pp. 292-300, on Blake's 'double or triple vision,' a valuable analysis; but the stages of 'vision' can be thus sharply distinguished only in analysis; in Blake they seem psychologically continuous, and really one.

p. 141, note 3. **'a white cloud . . .'** From *marginalia* to Swedenborg, extracted by Berger, p. 475. See too de Selincourt, *op. cit.*, ch. v.

p. 142. **a living critic.** See Symons, *W. B.*, p. 217.

p. 143. **Voice of the Ancient Bard.** See Sampson, pp. 72, 124-5, for the varying position of this poem in the two series of *Songs*. In the latest copies it comes at the end of *Songs of Innocence*, as 'a connecting link with the Introduction to *Songs of Experience*.'

p. 146. **stage of apprenticeship.** In his notes to Reynolds's *Discourses*, given by Ellis and Yeats, ii. 327: 'no one can ever design till he has learned the language of art by making many finished copies both from Nature and art, and of whatever comes in his way from earliest childhood . . . servile copying is the great merit of copying.' Clearly Blake means that this technical training is necessary for the true copying afterwards of things imagined, see *ib.*, p. 328: 'vision is determinate and perfect, and he copies that without fatigue.'

p. 147. **what is left?** See Berger, *W. B.*, ch. viii. p. 92. 'Il ne restera plus que l'imagination, c'est-à-dire le pouvoir de créer des notions nouvelles, et la passion, c'est-à-dire, dans son sens le plus large, tout ce qui est plaisir ou douleur, amour ou haine; puis . . . la volonté ou puissance d'action. . . . C'était là au plus près la psychologie de Blake.'

p. 150. **little boy Malkin.** See the child's map in *A Father's Memoirs to his Child* (1803), and Sampson, p. xxi.

p. 151, note 1. **Jacob Boehme.** Berger, pp. 233-6. I must be content here to speak at second-hand; the resemblance does not seem, however, to go very deep.

p. 151, note 2. **Swedenborg.** Berger, pp. 235-7; also pp. 468-77, where the MS. notes by Blake on *Divine Love or the Wisdom of Angels* (copy in the British Museum) are excerpted. They are not all salient or sympathetic, but contain a few of Blake's distinctive maxims: 'Love was not created impure, and is not naturally so.' 'If a thing loves, it is infinite.'

p. 153. **coinages . . . Ossianic in design.** See H. G. Hewlett, *Imperfect Genius: William Blake*, in *Contemp. Rev.*, vol. xxviii. p. 779: 'Uthorno thus reappeared as Urthona, Lutha as Leutha, Oithona as Oothoon, Touthormod as Theotormon,' etc. This 'curious essay in depreciation,' as Dr. Sampson calls it, traces some of Blake's sources of suggestion very ingeniously, but shows an odd deafness to his genius, and is throughout in the nature of a speech for the prosecution.

p. 157. **Macpherson's Ossian.** See Saintsbury, *Hist. of Prosody*, iii. 21, and 43-6, 'Excursus on *Ossian*.' I let my text stand, though this valuable excursus has appeared since it was written, as I have slightly expanded the statement of Prof. Saintsbury concerning the influence on Blake. Working out this blank seven-foot metre, partly on the lines adopted by Mr. Bridges in his *Milton's Prosody*, I find that many seemingly irregular lines preserve the underlying beat; although, in the later 'prophecies,' liberty is seldom far from anarchy.

p. 160. **anvil-music** (of *The Tiger*). Remarkably reproduced in the contemporary German translation (quoted Sampson, p. 115) by Dr. Julius, published in *Vaterländisches Museum*, Bd. II. Heft 1 (Hamburg, 1806). The explanation of Blake's appearance in a remote German magazine is found in the zeal of Crabb Robinson, who there wrote an article in German (which I have not seen), Julius adding versions of this and other poems; as seems to have been first pointed out, Dr. Sampson tells me, by R. H. Shepherd in his edition of the *Poems* (1874).

p. 163, note 1. **The Everlasting Gospel.** See Sampson, pp. 242-61, where the text is fully given for the first time, and its intricate arrangement unravelled.

p. 163, note 2. **Jerusalem.** See the exposition in the preface to Russell and Maclagan's reprint; and Berger, pp. 400-13.

p. 163, note 3. **traditional attributes.** See Berger, *W. B.*, pp. 208-9, 215: 'Vivre sans contrôle était l'idéal chrétien de Blake, comme de la plupart des hommes d'imagination.' P. 214: 'toutes les grandes vertus chrétiennes, obéissance, humilité, chasteté, ne sont autre chose que des destructions d'énergies, des illusions d'Ulro, des créations de spectres, des conséquences des lois d'Urizen. Jésus lui-même s'est élevé contre elles.'

p. 170. **men of letters.** (1) The extracts from Crabb Robinson's MSS. relating to Blake are partly found in his published *Diary* and *Reminiscences*; but Mr. A. Symons has re-examined the MSS., and published further material in his work on *William Blake*. These include the opinions of Blake on Wordsworth (Symons, p. 274), and of Wordsworth on Blake (p. 281). (2) Landor: see *Life* by Forster (ed. 1869), i. 323. (3) Coleridge: see *Letters of S. T. C.*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, ii. 685-8. (4) Lamb: in letter to Bernard Barton, May 15, 1824; quoted in Lucas's *Life of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ii. 125-6. (5) Southey: see Crabb Robinson, *Diary*, 24th July 1811. (6) See *Diary* of Lady Charlotte Bury (1838-9), *sub anno* 1820, cited by Ellis and Yeats, i. 141.

p. 172. **fiction.** See, for these two chapters, besides the general histories of literature, Sir W. Raleigh, *The English Novel* (1894, etc.); Wilbur Cross, *Development of the English Novel* (New York, 1909); besides the general histories, especially Saintsbury, *Short History of Eng. Lit.*, pp. 611 foll., 677 foll.

p. 174. **lines of direction of the novel.** See W. Dibelius, *Die englische Romankunst*, 2 vols., Berlin (1910); 'a study of the technique of the English novel in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.' Here

Dr. Dibelius works out, in the most formal German way, and with the utmost minuteness, the dependence of the later on the earlier schools. He makes clear, if he somewhat overstates, the debt of Fielding and his contemporaries to the old prose romances, and that of the sensation-mongers and the doctrinaires to Fielding and Smollett. His dissection of the contributions of Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe is of value; he shows (i. 332, 338, etc.) the increase of technical skill, and the new elements introduced into fiction, which stand to their credit.

p. 175, note 1. **history.** See *ante*, pp. 335-6, on the precursors of Scott in the historical novel.

p. 175, note 2. **a few examples.** *The Spiritual Quixote* is in Mrs. Barbauld's *British Novelists*, vols. xxxii., xxxiii.; Mackenzie's stories, *ib.*, vol. xxix.; *The Correspondents* has not been reprinted.

p. 176. **a Methodist Hudibras.** For a curious skit of far later date on Methodist breeding, see *Memoirs of a Peeress: or the Days of Fox*, 'edited' by Lady Charlotte Bury (1837), ii. 9, etc. A gluttonous Mr. Bumptext and a Mr. Quiesbury figure, phantasmal ancestors of Pecksniff, or descendants of Zeal-in-the-Land Busy. Lockhart's *Matthew Wald* is tinged with the same antipathy.

p. 177. **Miss Burney.** See Austin Dobson's ed. of the *Diary* (1778-1840) *and Letters of Madame D'Arblay* (6 vols., 1904-5), and his study in 'Eng. Men of Letters' (1903); and *The Early Diary of F. B.* (*i.e.* 1768-78), ed. Mrs. A. R. Ellis (new ed., 2 vols., 1907).

p. 180, note 1. **fiction shades off into educational writing.** No record of English pedagogic writing can be essayed here, or of works for the young. A typical list is found in Clara Reeve's *Progress of Romance* (1785), ii. 102-3, of lessons, spelling-books, tales, and fables for children: *e.g.* Mrs. Trimmer's *Sacred History Selected*, and *Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature*; also *The Female Academy*, or *History of Mrs. Teachum*; and various histories, ancient and modern, in the form of question and answer. The well-known publisher, John Newbery, issued many such works. The contemporary tales and playlets of Madame de Genlis were no doubt an example, and she is named by Clara Reeve; but the subject still awaits full investigation. See *ante*, p. 205.

p. 180, note 2. **Byron.** See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 370 (ed. R. E. Prothero). 'Talking of vanity, whose praise do I prefer? Why, Mrs. Inchbald's . . . because her *Simple Story* and *Nature and Art*, are, to me, *true* to their *titles*; and, consequently, her short note to Rogers about the *Giaour* delighted me more than anything, except the *Edinburgh Review*.'

p. 181. **not hanged.** He dies of fever, but his crime is never exposed. There are several reprints of Mrs. Inchbald's stories, none very recent. Her *Memoirs* were ed. by E. Boaden (2 vols., 1833).

p. 182, note 1. **Hermsprong.** In Barbauld's *British Novelists*, vol. xlviii. Others of his tales are in Ballantyne's *Novelists' Library*, vol. ix. (1824); see the comments of Scott to all these writers, prefixed therein, and reprinted in his *Misc. Prose Works*, vol. i. (1878).

p. 182, note 2. Holcroft's *Memoirs* and his novels were not reprinted. His *Travels from Hamburg through Westphalia*, etc. (2 vols., 1804), give word of his meetings with Madame de Staël and other persons of note, but are heavily written.

p. 184. **Mrs. Opie.** *Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell (1854), is a dull volume except for Mrs. Opie's own letters. Few of her tales were reprinted; none, that I can find, lately. See too Kegan Paul, *William Godwin*.

p. 186, note 1. **Maria Edgeworth.** There are many editions of her novels both collectively (*e.g.* in 10 vols., 1893) and singly. *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee*, and *Ormond*, reprinted 1895, have introductions by Lady Ritchie. The original *Memoir* is by F. A. Edgeworth, her stepmother (privately printed 1867), with letters. See too, its abridgment, ed. Aug. Hare (*Life and Letters*, 2 vols., 1894); and the vol. by the Hon. Emily Lawless (in 'Eng. Men of Letters,' 1904); and *Life* by Miss Zimmern in 'Eminent Women Series' (1883).

p. 186, note 2. **R. L. Edgeworth.** *Memoirs*, by Maria Edgeworth (2 vols. 1820, revised ed. 1844). The latter part is from her hand.

p. 187. **Scott's tributes** (to Miss Edgeworth's tales). The first is in 1814, in the postscript to *Waverley*, where he speaks of his 'wish to emulate, however distantly, the admirable Irish portraits'; another, in 1829 (general preface to the Waverley Novels), is quoted in text.

p. 189, note 1. **Tourgéniev.** See Chambers's *Cyclopædia of Eng. Lit.* (1902), ii. 736. Dr. David Patrick, the editor, kindly informs me that the reference is there drawn from *A Book of Sibyls*, by Miss Thackeray (now Lady Thackeray Ritchie), ed. 1883, p. 140; and that the ultimate source is a letter in *Daily News*, 7th Sept. 1883, signed 'by one who knew' Tourgéniev. I have not traced the statement further, and several Russian scholars I have consulted have failed to find it in Tourgéniev's works.

p. 189, note 2. **Hannah More.** *Works*, 8 vols., 1801, etc.

p. 190. **Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton.** This lady was born in 1758 and lived till 1816. She was unmarried, but after a time took the style of 'Mrs.' or 'Mistress.' Her *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* is a sarcastic attack on Godwin and the votaries of the Revolution. She wrote verse, and one of her pieces, 'My Ain Fireside,' was very popular.

p. 191. **Jane Austen.** *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, by her nephew, J. E. Austen-Leigh (1869); second ed. enlarged, including the discarded chapter of *Persuasion*, *Lady Susan*, and *The Watsons* (1871), etc., and in 'Eversley Series' (1906), is the authority for the facts, together with *Letters of Jane Austen*, ed. Lord Brabourne (1884). *J. A.*, by Goldwin Smith ('Great Writers,' 1890); Whately's art. in *Quart. Rev.* (1830); notices in Macaulay's *Life* (by G. O. Trevelyan), may be named amongst criticisms; also the chapter in *Milieux d'Art*, by Charles Bonnier (1910, privately printed), and A. C. Bradley's paper in *Essays by Members of the Eng. Association*, vol. ii. (1911). There are many editions: the prefaces by Austin Dobson to that in Macmillan's 'Illustrated Standard Novels' are noteworthy.

p. 192. **lowest middle class.** The young farmer, Martin, in *Emma*, is the chief exception, but he is a mere outline. The remark that Jane Austen does not draw servants has, I find, been anticipated by Mr. Austin Dobson in his admirable preface to the same book (ed. 1896), p. xiii.

p. 192, note 2. **Charlotte Brontë.** See Clement Shorter, *C. B. and her Circle*, 1896, p. 399, for letter previously unprinted: 'Anything like warmth or enthusiasm, anything energetic, poignant, heartfelt, is utterly out of place in commending these works: all such demonstrations the authoress would have

met with a well-bred sneer, etc. . . . Jane Austen was a complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete and rather insensible (not *senseless*) woman.' Certainly dispassionate, but nothing like insensible; for she created Anne Elliot.

p. 195. **the old periodical essay.** Elizabeth Bennet read *The Mirror*; *The Idler* lay about at Mansfield Park, also *Quarterly Reviews*; and Crabbe's *Tales*, and Isaac Hawkins Browne's now forgotten works. The fickle Mr. Crawford also reads *Henry VIII.* aloud 'with the happiest knack.'

p. 197. **final happy marriage** (of Anne Elliot). This incident gave trouble; an occasion for bringing Captain Wentworth to the point was hard to find, and the chapter was twice written, the first draft being printed by Austen-Leigh, *Memoir*, ch. xii. In the *textus receptus* Wentworth, in company where Anne is present, writes his declaration of love, and hands it to her; they meet out-of-doors later and all is made clear. In the cancelled chapter she finds herself in Admiral Croft's house with him, and the Admiral sends him to her with a business proposal about Kellynch, on the supposition that she is engaged to Walter Elliot, her cousin. She has to undeceive Wentworth, and the explanations follow at once. This strong scene of high comedy Jane Austen abandoned, perhaps owing to its abruptness. The little changes of text in the conversation that is common to the two drafts show her punctilious instinct for language.

p. 199. '**Mrs. Forester.**' *Letters*, ii. 312.

p. 200. '**a tall young man.**' Cp. *Letters*, i. 213: 'He was a very young man, just entered Oxford, wearing spectacles, and has heard that *Evelina* was written by Dr. Johnson.'

p. 206, note 1. **William Beckford.** Until 1910 there was little on Beckford's life but the hack *Memoirs of W. B.* (1859, 2 vols.), by Cyrus Redding, and the art. in *D. N. B.* by R. Garnett, with the introduction to the same writer's edition of *Vathek* (1893). Many legends, some of them scandalous, are also scattered abroad. Much new material, including about 200 unpublished letters, and a careful responsible biography, can be found in Lewis Melville's *Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill* (1910); it contains a bibliography, and shows Beckford's life and character for the first time in his true proportions. See too an art. by the same writer in *Fortnightly Review*, Dec. 1909; and others on the dealings of Beckford with Henley, in *Athenæum*, Nov. 27 and Dec. 4, 1909; with notes on the same topic, *ib.*, Dec. 11, 1909, by John Hodgkin. See too article on *W. B.* by S. Lane Poole in *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1910.

p. 206, note 2. **Vathek.** Beckford probably contributed to the prolix notes, as he did not materially alter them in later English editions. There should be a new English version of the French, as Henley's donnish style is misleading. For the French, see the reprint by Stéphane Mallarmé (1876 and 1893); and his preface, the most valuable study of *Vathek* that exists. The French edition (Mallarmé, ed. 1893, pp. xxvi. foll.) came out both at Paris and Lausanne in 1787, by whose authority is unknown. Its prefatory note states that the English edition had been printed 'through the indiscretion of a literary man to whom the MS. was entrusted three years before.' The French work was not apparently noticed in any review or bibliography; Mallarmé judges that the copies may have perished in the political storm. In 1815 Beckford had it reprinted, with a few changes; and Mérimée planned to edit the work, but never

did so. Mallarmé aptly sums up the paradox: 'Cas spécial, unique entre mainte réminiscence, d'un ouvrage par l'Angleterre cru le sien et que la France ignore: ici original, là traduction; tandis que (pour y tout confondre) l'auteur du fait de sa naissance et d'admirable esquisses n'appartient pas aux lettrés de chez nous, tout en leur demandant, après coup, une place prépondérante et quasi d'initiateur oublié!'

p. 206, note 3. **Hall of Eblis.** The flaming hearts are from T. S. Gueullette's *Mogul Tales* (Eng. tr., 1736), cited in Weber's *Tales of the East*, Edin. (1812), iii. 58 foll. Three men are found seated at a triangular table gazing on a book with golden clasps, with the legend, 'Let no man touch this divine treatise who is not perfectly pure.' They are sinners awaiting judgment, and 'through their skin, which appeared like crystal, I saw their hearts compassed by fire, by which, though burnt unceasingly, yet . . . never consumed.' This reference is due to Miss Martha Pike Conant's valuable monograph, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, N. Y., Columbia Univ. Press (1908), pp. 37, 275. Beckford had the *Mogul Tales* in his library. See Bignon's *Adventures of Abdalla*, tr. Hatchett (1728) (named in Conant, pp. 38, 275). This Hall, says Beckford, 'was the creation of my own fancy. Old Fonthill House had one of the largest halls in the kingdom, lofty and loud-echoing, whilst numerous doors led into it from different parts of the building, through long, dim, sounding passages. It was from this that I formed my imaginary hall' (Redding, i. 243).

p. 207. **episodes.** See *The Episodes of Vathek*, ed. Lewis Melville (forthcoming). By Mr. Melville's courtesy I was enabled to read a transcript of *Alasi et Firouz Kah* and *Barkiarokh*; *Alasi* and *Zulkäis* appeared in the *English Review*. Other works are unpublished, including a *Liber Veritatis*, which is 'likely to remain' so, as it is a dissection of the heraldic claims of sundry noble families. See for *Al-Raoui*, 'from the Arabic,' Redding, i. 217 foll. See p. 456 *post*, *ad fin.*

p. 208. **travel.** G. T. Bettany's ed. (1891) of *Vathek* contains *Dreams*, etc.

p. 209. **Byron.** See his note on the *Siege of Corinth*, where a passage is adapted from *Vathek*; and Moore's note to *Childe Harold*, i. 22, where a diary of Byron is cited praising the 'correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination' of Beckford; the stanza itself; the allusion in *The Giaour* to the fiery hearts, and in *Manfred* (ii. 4) to the hall of Arimanes; also Redding, *Memoirs*, i. 243: 'Byron complimented me on the tale more than once, especially on Eblis.'

p. 211. **the composition of Caleb Williams.** In the preface (1832) to the reprint of *Fleetwood* Godwin adds that the use of the first person in his stories was suited to his 'vein of delineation,' which is 'the analysis of the private and internal operations of the mind, employing my metaphysical dissecting-knife in tracing and laying bare the involutions of motive': no bad description of the psychological novel, as yet hardly a distinct species.

p. 213, note 1. **books on the French Revolution** (by John Moore). His *View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany* (1778) is an early sketch; the *Journal during a Residence in France* (1793) is more important. The first of these is in vol. i. of Moore's *Works* (7 vols., 1820); the second in vol. iii.; *Zeluco* in vol. v. (and in Barbauld's *British Novelists*, vols. xxxiv.-v.); another story, *Mordaunt*, in vol. vii.

p. 213, note 2. **Mrs. Radcliffe.** The anonymous *Memoir* in her *Posthumous*

Works, etc., 4 vols., 1833, contains the passages quoted in text from her journals (i. 20, 53, 59-60); besides *Gaston*, and the metrical *St. Alban's Abbey. A Journey through Holland, etc. . . . made in the summer of 1794* (2 vols., 1795), describes also a tour to the English lakes. There are no modern reprints of the novels in full, but many distinctive extracts from Mrs. Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin can be found in *Tales of Mystery*, ed. Saintsbury (1891).

p. 215. **Lewis.** See *Life and Corresp.* (2 vols., 1839). *The Bravo of Venice* (1804), and the drama *The Castle Spectre* (1798) may be named also; and the *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor* (1834). For Byron's opinion of Lewis, see his *Letters and Journals* (ed. R. E. Prothero, 1898-1900), ii. 368: 'the worst parts of *The Monk*. . . . These descriptions ought to have been written by Tiberius at Caprea—they are forced—the *philtered* ideas of a jaded voluptuary,' etc. On Lewis himself, *ib.*, pp. 315-18; the quotation, kindly and humorous, like Scott's MS. note accompanying, is from Byron's *Detached Thoughts*. Scott oddly says, 'He had the finest ear for the rhythm of verse I ever heard—finer than Byron's.' This exceeds; but Lewis's real power of cadence is remarked on by Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, iii. 92.

p. 216. **The Vampyre.** A precise account of this affair is given in *The Diary of John William Polidori*, edited by W. M. Rossetti (1911), pp. 11-23, 125-6. Byron's tale, a fragment, was afterwards printed by him at the end of *Mazeppa*, but meantime Polidori's, which is developed from Byron's hints, though in a different form of narrative, was published in the *New Monthly Magazine*, April 1819; it is there attributed to Byron, and won vogue in consequence, and Byron disclaimed it. Mr. Rossetti exonerates Polidori from having been privy to the false ascription of authorship; and Polidori himself denied the charge in print.

p. 217, note 1. **Maturin.** His stories do not seem to have been reprinted after his lifetime, except *Montorio* in 1841 (Ballantyne's Library), and *Melmoth*, of which an edition appeared (3 vols.) in 1892, with a valuable anonymous biography and bibliography.

p. 217, note 2. **befriended by Scott.** The story is in Lockhart, and Scott's reviews of some of Maturin's novels are reprinted in his *Prose Works* (1851), xviii. 157-208.

p. 217, note 3. **and Byron.** See *Letters of Byron*, ed. Prothero (1898-1900), iv. 171-2, for Byron on Coleridge's attack on *Bertram*, which appeared at the end of the *Biographia Literaria* (1817). Byron had caused *Bertram* to be acted at Drury Lane.

p. 217, note 4. **condemns Rousseau.** In *The Wild Irish Boy* (1808), i. 263, the undesirable siren lady of the tale exhibits a library consisting of Rousseau's novels and *Le Contrat social*, works by Crébillon and Diderot, and Godwin's *Political Justice*. Later (iii. 166-8) *Belinda* is eulogised.

p. 218, note 1. **The Fatal Revenge.** Published, like the two succeeding novels, under the name of Dennis Jasper Murphy.

p. 218, note 2. **Planche.** In *Portraits littéraires* (1836), i. 47, art. 'Maturin.' Later, Planche says that posterity will place *Bertram* between *Faust* and *Manfred*; but, we may ask, where is it now? He also speaks, aptly enough, of Maturin's fault, 'une sorte d'exubérance fastueuse particulière a son pays . . . l'emphase des images et le gout des paralogismes.'

p. 220, note 1. **never put into words but once.** It is indicated in the story of

Walberg, *Melmoth* (ed. 1892), iii. 133, though not even here either by Melmoth or the person tempted. 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—Oh! let us starve, die, rot before your eyes, rather than that you should seal your perdition by that horrible——'

p. 220, note 2. '**none have consented.**' In the preface to the first edition Maturin gives a passage from one of his own sermons as the key to the book :—'At this moment is there one of us present—however we may have departed from the Lord, disobeyed His will, and disregarded His word—is there one of us who would, at this moment, accept all that man can bestow, or earth afford, to resign the hope of his salvation?—no, there is not one—not such a fool on earth, were the enemy of mankind to traverse it with the offer.' I owe this quotation to a dissertation by Willy Müller, *C. R. M.'s* Fatal Revenge . . . *und* Melmoth the Wanderer ; *ein Beitrag zur Gothic Romance*, Weida (1908). Dr. Müller gives a full analysis of both tales, tracing their connections with Lewis, Mrs. Radcliffe, etc.

p. 221. **Hugo and Balzac.** For the influence of Maturin in France see Charles Bonnier, *Milieux d'Art* (1910, privately printed), pp. 76-86. Dr. Bonnier gives a translation in French verse of one of the best passages of *Bertram*, suppressed after representation in the printed copies, and quoted in Scott's review ; and traces the many allusions to Melmoth in Balzac, who in his early tale, *L'Elixir de longue Vie*, couples him with Manfred, Faust, and Don Juan, and continues his story in *Melmoth réconcilié à l'Eglise*. 'L'idée de la nouvelle de Balzac est la transmigration de ce pouvoir que possédait Melmoth, de cette énergie, passant de corps en corps, et finissant, dans le transfert, par s'affaiblir et s'éteindre.' This notion, as Dr. Bonnier points out, is used by R. L. Stevenson in *The Bottle Imp*. The whole essay is one of much instruction for the student of Maturin ; the allusions to him in Hugo and De Vigny are indicated ; also his influence on Poe.

p. 223. **the credit is Hogg's.** See *Athenæum*, 16th Nov. 1895. Mrs. Garden, Hogg's daughter, there wrote that she had the MS., which was all in Hogg's hand ; this in rejoinder to suggestions of Lockhart's participation made in the *Illust. London News*, Nov. 1894, and in *Macmillan's Mag.*, Sept. 1889. I owe these references to the kindness of the Rev. Charles S. Christie of Cults.

p. 224. **Barrett,** *The Heroine*. Reprinted 1909, with introduction by Sir W. Raleigh.

p. 226. **Baron Munchausen.** There are many editions, but the standard one is T. Seccombe's (1895), illustrated by W. Strang and J. B. Clark. Mr. Seccombe's learned introduction is a pleasant guide through the mystifications of the story.

p. 227. **no such mental movement.** See a good passage in A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909), 'The Long Poem in the Age of Wordsworth,' pp. 178-180 : 'But the freedom of spirit, the knowledge, the superiority to prejudice and caprice and fanaticism, the openness to ideas, the atmosphere that is all about us when we read Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, we do not find. Can we imagine any one of those four either inspired or imprisoned as Shelley was by the doctrines of Godwin? Could any of them have seen in the French Revolution no more significance than Scott appears to have detected? How cramped are the attitudes, sympathetic or antipathetic, of nearly all our poets towards the Christian religion,' etc.

p. 228. **Thomas Reid.** The standard edition of his *Works* is Sir William Hamilton's, first published in 1803. The edition cited here is that of 1846 ; the passage quoted is on p. 380 ; the preface to the *Enquiry* (p. 95) gives Reid's own account of the effect of Hume's *Treatise* on his mind ; for the discussion of taste, grandeur, etc., see pp. 492-7. The most useful sketch, for the present purpose, that I have found is in Höffding, *Hist. of Mod. Philos.* (Eng. tr., vol. i. pp. 449 foll.) ; and see art. on Reid by A. Seth in *Ency. Brit.*, 9th and also 11th ed.

p. 230. **Dugald Stewart.** *Works* (10 vols., 1854-8), edited by Sir W. Hamilton. The following references are from the 1877 reprint of this : on the Beautiful, the Sublime, and Taste, v. 190 foll. ; on the Picturesque, *ib.*, p. 230 foll. (see note *ante* to p. 14) ; on Imagination, ii. 431 foll. ; and on Wit, ii. 270 foll. For Stewart and other philosophers, reference may be made once for all to Sir L. Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 1876 and 1902), which it is idle to praise.

p. 231. **Thomas Brown.** The attacks by Sir W. Hamilton in his *Discussions* (1852) and elsewhere on Brown's philosophy are vigorous, while J. S. Mill, in his *Examination of Hamilton*, speaks highly of Brown. His *Poetical Works* appeared in 1820 (4 vols.).

p. 233. **Sir J. Reynolds.** Malone edited his literary works in 2 vols., 1797.

p. 234. **Burke.** The edition here cited of the *Works* is that in 'Bohn's Standard Library' (6 vols.) and of the *Speeches* in the same (2 vols.). *Select Works*, ed. E. J. Payne (3 vols., 1897), with valuable notes. The old editions came out 1792-1827, the *Correspondence* in 1844. Sir J. Prior's *Life* is in Bohn's ed. T. MacKnight's *Life and Times of E. B.* (3 vols., 1858-60) is also of value ; but as political and personal studies of Burke the two books (1867 and ('Eng. Men of Letters') 1879) by Lord Morley remain authoritative, along with Sir J. F. Stephen's three papers in *Horae Sabbaticae* (Third Series, 1892).

p. 235. **The Sublime and Beautiful.** On all this see Bernard Bosanquet *History of Aesthetic* (1892). Burke's work deeply influenced Lessing and Mendelssohn and other German theorists, as well as the English and Scottish philosophers. See on Sir U. Price in text (*ante*, p. 17) and on Dugald Stewart (*ante*, p. 230). Burke's other early writings, such as the *Annual Register* and *Abridgment of the History of England*, do not come into our chronicle.

p. 238. **Our Indian government. . . .** *Works*, ii. 197.

p. 240. **his best exponent.** Lord Morley in *Ency. Brit.* (11th ed., *s.v.*).

p. 241, note 1. **'Dark and inscrutable.'** *Works*, iii. 79.

p. 241, note 2. **'natural rights' . . . 'the social covenant.'** A few texts, at successive dates, may be referred to, showing the development of Burke's attitude towards these conceptions. (1) 1777 : *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* : definitions of a 'free government' ('for any practical purpose it is what the people think so') and of the 'extreme of liberty' (*Works*, ii. 29-30). (2) 1777 : *Address to the King* : 'the people at that time [1688] re-entered into their original rights . . . to the free choice, therefore, of the people, without either king or parliament, we owe that happy establishment . . .' (*Works*, v. 473). (3) 1783 : *Speech on East India Bill* : 'The rights of men, that is to say, the natural rights of mankind, are indeed sacred things' and are still better if 'chartered rights' ; and, 'if the abuse is proved, the contract is broken, and we

re-enter into all our rights,—that is, into the exercise of all our duties' (*Works*, ii. 176-9—the whole passage must be studied). (4) 1788: *Speech on Warren Hastings*: 'the primeval, indefeasible, unalterable law of nature and of nations,' etc. (*Speeches*, i. 101 foll.). For later developments, and Burke's defences of his consistency, see *e.g.* (5) 1790: *Reflections* (*Works*, ii. 331-5) on the 'natural rights of the people' which are 'almost always sophistically confounded with their power,' and on the 'artificial' character of government; and (ii. 368-9) on the 'contract,' now regarded as a 'partnership' between all the generations. (6) 1791: *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*: the 'new Whig' theory (*Works*, iii. 45) that the contract does not 'bind posterity.'

p. 242. **the original victims.** See the *Observations* on the *Reflections* by William A. Miles, Pitt's diplomatic emissary to Paris in 1790: *Corresp. of W. A. Miles on the French Revol.* (1890), i. 265-270. Miles shrewdly points out that Burke's attack on Price's sermon had given currency to that obscure discourse; that the attack on the democratic party in France was put down 'to the account of the British Government'; 'and hence the idea of our country being hostile to the Revolution in France is confirmed.' Burke, he adds, ought to have established the 'general satisfaction of the English people with their own constitution and government,' and the impertinence of recommending a change. Miles was well posted for observation, and his few pages are one of the best criticisms on Burke, so far as regards the impression produced by the *Reflections*. He wrote, however, a scurrilous attack on the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, called *A Letter to Henry Duncombe, Esq.* (1796).

p. 243. **retort of Mackintosh.** In *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791), pp. 61-2. See the whole passage.

p. 247, note 1. **a whole page.** *Third Letter on a Regicide Peace*, in *Works*, v. 276-7.

p. 247, note 2. **'harpies.'** *Letter to a Noble Lord*, in *Works*, v. 120-1.

p. 247, note 3. **tapestry.** *Third Letter on a Regicide Peace*, in *Works*, v. 266-7.

p. 248. **'It is a remark . . .'** See *Appeal*, etc., in *Works*, iii. 92.

p. 249. **'But I cannot conceive . . .'** See *Letter to Sheriffs*, in *Works*, ii. 14.

p. 250. **'Party . . .'** See *Present Discontents*, in *Works*, i. 375-6.

p. 251. **'God forbid . . .'** See *On the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, in *Works*, iii. 141.

p. 252, note 1. **'peace.'** *Works*, i. 453-4.

p. 252, note 2. **the historian of literary criticism.** Saintsbury, *Short Hist. of Eng. Lit.* (1898), p. 630: 'a very curious, and, until his example made it imitable, nearly unique faculty of *building up* an argument or a picture by a succession of complementary strokes, not added at haphazard, but growing out of one another.'

p. 253. **the example of the enemy.** *Works*, ii. 62.

p. 255. **one passage.** *Works*, iii. 104-5.

p. 259, note 1. **cross-fire aimed at Burke.** The following are some of the titles: *The Rights of Kings* (1791), assigned to Wolcot; *Observations on the Reflections*, etc., by Mrs. Macaulay (1790); *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), by Mary Wollstonecraft; *Philosophical Reflections on the Late Revolution . . . addressed to Dr. Priestley* (1790), by J. Courtenay, M.P. (a curious ironic *reductio ad absurdum* of monarchical theory; 'Socrates might have saved

himself and his country . . . by supporting the civil and ecclesiastical establishment of Athens,' etc.); *A Letter from Earl Stanhope* (1790); *Short Observations on the . . . Reflections* (1790), anon. ('I am at a loss to recognise the bold and ardent assertor of American Independence,' etc.); *Thoughts on Government, occasioned by . . . Reflections* (1790), anon. ('Mr. Burke thinks there must be blood.—I will not say, Edmund, thy wish is father to that thought'! and the like); *A Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, Esq., from a Dissenting Country Attorney, in Defence of his Civil Profession and Religious Dissent* (1791), anon. *Letter to Edmund Burke*, by Sir Brooke Boothby, Bart. (1791). For the tract attributed to Porson, see Beloe's *Sexagenarian* (1817), vol. ii., *ad fin.*, 'Porsoniana.'

p. 259, note 2. **Mrs. Macaulay.** 'Their Amazonian allies, headed by Kate Macaulay and the virago Barbauld, whom Mr. Burke calls our *poissardes*, spit their rage at eighteenpence a head, and will return to Fleet Ditch, more fortunate in being forgotten than their predecessors, immortalised in the *Dunciad*.' (H. Walpole to Miss Berry, Dec. 20, 1790.)

p. 260, note 1. **Horsley's tracts.** These appeared in the years 1783-5. The issue was historical rather than doctrinal, Priestley having denied to the earlier Christians a belief in Christ's divinity. The bishop, with many professions of charity and prayers against heat, falls foul of his opponent (who had certainly given the provocation, as regards tone) with an icy fury.

p. 260, note 2. **Horsley's liberalism.** See his *Speeches in Parliament*, posthumously published by his son in 1813. It is not clear how much they are edited; but some of them are masterpieces of lucid and close, as well as of graceful, exposition. Horsley pleaded against the slave-trade, and against the penal laws imposed on Catholics; always with politic qualifications that give him the substance of what he wants. Slavery in itself he does not absolutely oppose, and Catholics he will not admit to civic office. Less hampered, Horsley's really high gifts might have produced some piece of real eloquence, or even of literature.

p. 260, note 3. **utility.** See note 3 to p. 278, *post*. The definition had gained some currency between Priestley's use of it and Bentham's; see J. Cartwright, *Legislative Rights of the Commonalty Vindicated* (2nd ed., 1777), pp. 81-2: 'The ideas of any positive rights in the people (say they) . . . appear to us to have no absolute existence in nature. . . . As the *greatest attainable happiness to the greatest number* is the grand end of all the laws of morality and prudence, so what you term positive rights of the people are probably to be considered no otherwise than as natural means to the end in view.' This tract (first ed., 1776), which pleads for 'equal and complete representation' and annual parliaments, is regarded as the first, or a very early, formulation of the claims which later became 'points of the charter.' Cartwright penned much else in the same cause which is of historical note: but he is a lumbering writer.

p. 260, note 4. **Priestley.** *Works*, ed. J. T. Rutt (1817-32), in 26 vols. Vol. v., *Hist. of Corruptions*; vol. xxii. contains, besides the *Letters to Burke*, an *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, and the *Free Address* in favour of removing Catholic disabilities (1769). *The Duty of Forgiveness of Injuries* (1791), vol. xv., is the most famous of Priestley's sermons, uttered after the mob had wrecked his house at Birmingham in resentment at the *Letters to Burke*. This discourse, admirably composed, urges that 'no malevolence of others

should extinguish our benevolence to them'; and Priestley takes care not to minimise the sins he is forgiving. His text, 'forgive them, for they know not what they do,' well indicates the spirit of the work; with all his qualities Priestley was not strong in the sense of humour, or he might have avoided the parallels implied.

p. 261, note 1. **'philosophy or medicine.'** *Works*, xx' 236 (Letter XIV.). These hopes of the doctrinaires could not be more naïvely set forth than in Richard Price's discourse, *The Evidence for a Future Period of Improvement*, etc., p. 25. The grounds for hope are the alleviation of the horrors of war, 'the softened spirit of popery,' and 'the extinction of the order of Jesuits'; together with the diffusion of knowledge created by printing and better navigation; and lastly, the establishment, 'at this moment going forward, of an *equal* representation of the different provinces of France.' These things 'render the present state of the world unspeakably different from what it was. They show us man a milder animal than he was, and the world outgrowing its evils, superstition giving way, Antichrist failing, and the *Millennium* hastening.' This was in 1787.

p. 261, note 2. **Mackintosh.** The *Miscellaneous Works*, in 3 vols., 1846, contain most of his important works, except the *History of England* and the *History of the Revolution of* 1688. The Peltier and other speeches are in *Works*, vol. iii. *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon. Sir James Mackintosh*, by his son, R. J. Mackintosh, 2 vols., 1835, is a rather flaccid and windy compilation, but contains long extracts from the letters and diaries, which are our best means of beholding this elusive man, so much buried behind his books and attainments.

p. 263, note 1. **reviews his own revulsions.** *Life*, i. 129-136 (in second ed., 1836). The letter written from Bombay in 1804 is the most interesting document on Mackintosh's mind. Among notable men disenchanted of their first hopes in the Revolution he mentions Klopstock, Kant, Lavater, and Alfieri. Of his lectures he says: 'I rebounded from my original opinions too far towards the opposite extreme.' But 'can I be certain that the establishment of monarchical despotism in France, and the horrible effects of tyranny and imposture around me in this country [India] may not have driven my understanding once more to a point a little on the democratic side of the centre? I own I rather suspect myself of this; and though I labour to correct myself of this, etc.' Such a watching of his own mind, as if it were a compass oscillating under a blow, is Mackintosh all over. For a virulent attack on Mackintosh's return towards Liberalism, see *Anti-Jacobin Review*, 1814, xxvii. 356, in which his *Vindiciae Infernae* (*sic*) are alluded to.

p. 263, note 2. **attest this reputation.** *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, ed. Lord John Russell (1853-56, 8 vols.), vi. 90. See also Lord J. Russell's account in the preface of the same vol., pp. xi-xii. This versatility of Mackintosh's was evidently his *note* in the Whig set; 'epigrams, farces, and novels were not less familiar to him than the treatises of Grotius or the annals of Thuanus.' And again, in somewhat fatuous (unless it be ironic) style, Sir John observes that 'his mind seemed to comprehend in distinct but harmonious method the whole history of human thought, from the earliest speculations of the friends of Job to the latest subtleties of the disciples of Kant.' For other descriptions, see Macaulay's in his well-known *Essay*; and references in Scott's *Journal*.

p. 264, note 1. **Hazlitt on Mackintosh.** In *The Spirit of the Age* (1825).

p. 264, note 2. **Paine.** Moncure D. Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine* (2 vols., 1892), and his edition of *The Writings of T. P.* (4 vols., 1894-96), are authoritative as to facts, and clear away many transmitted and injurious libels upon Paine; a service that may excuse much diffuse hero-worship and want of perspective; Paine's importance is taken overmuch at his own valuation, and he is made out to be a great Positivist before Comte.

p. 267, note 1. **as much religious as political.** This is well shown by Conway, *Life*, i. 232, 239; ii. 201.

p. 267, note 2. **'religion of humanity.'** The phrase occurs in the seventh paper of *The Crisis*, 21st Nov. 1778. See *Life*, ii. 206.

p. 267, note 3. **his scanty creed.** Paine's deism is enlarged upon in his replies to adversaries; *Life*, ii. 263, 266-7. His 'hope of happiness hereafter' is piquantly expanded; *Life*, ii. 370: 'My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavouring to make their fellow-mortals happy, for this is the only way in which we can serve God, will be happy hereafter; and that the very wicked will meet with some punishment. But those who are neither good nor bad, or are too insignificant for notice will be dropt entirely . . . so insignificant, both in character and conduct, as not to be worth the trouble of damning or saving, or of raising from the dead.'

p. 268. **shared in the revulsion.** The passage is quoted in *Life*, ii. 301.

p. 269, note 1. **Godwin.** Works seldom reprinted. For bibliographical and other details, and a good account of Godwin's foes and controversies, see R. Gourg, *William Godwin* (1908), an elaborate dissertation. For biography, see C. Kegan Paul, *W. G., His Friends and Contemporaries* (2 vols., 1876); Stephen, *Eng. Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (ed. 1902), ii. 264-81; the same author's *Godwin and Shelley*, in *Hours in a Library*, vol. i.; and Hazlitt, *Spirit of the Age*. For the decline of Godwin's repute in his lifetime, see too James and Horace Smith, *Horace in London* (1813), who for once bely their taste and good humour by parodying Cowper's tenderest lyric (see *post*, ii. 281):

> Thy Muse, for meretricious feats,
> Does quarto penance now in sheets,
> Or, clothing parcels, roams the streets,
> My Godwin! etc.

For Godwin as a 'prince of spongers' see Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place* (1898), pp. 59-61, and Shelley's correspondence.

p. 269, note 2. **Crabb Robinson.** See his *Diary* (ed. 1872), i. 18; also many references in its index.

p. 271. **Condorcet.** The *Esquisse d'un Tableau historique des Progrès de l'Esprit humain* came out in 1794 (Eng. tr., 1795). It would have saved Godwin some of his errors if he had been able to digest this potent book; for though it worships the same deity of Reason, which to Condorcet means chiefly the scientific and mathematical reason, it is yet founded on the conception, often largely and powerfully expounded, of the historic growth of Reason. Godwin and his like talk as if Reason had been discovered during the last ten years. Condorcet's large perspectives—out of which, it is true, he omits enormous tracts, and which are therefore sometimes seen awry—appear to

have been strangely unknown both to the philosophers and the poets in England, whether conservative or revolutionary; an ignorance much to the detriment of both sides. See F. J. Picavet, *Les Idéologues* (1891), pp. 101-116, for the position of Condorcet amongst the theorists around him.

p. 273. **Mary Wollstonecraft.** The little trail of revolutionary 'feminism,' as it would now be called, that she left behind her, may be studied (from a blindly hostile point of view) in *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* (1799, iii. 27 foll.) in a notice of an anonymous poem called *The Unsexed Females*, a work modelled on *The Pursuits of Literature*. Here are pilloried Helen Maria Williams; Miss Yearsley, a milkmaid who had written rebellious verses; Mary Hays, authoress of the stories *The Victim of Prejudice* and *Emma Courtney*: while Charlotte Smith and Mrs. Barbauld are mournfully rebuked for their gleams of sympathy with radicalism:

> The veteran Barbauld caught the strain,
> And found her songs of love, her lyrics vain . . .
> And Charlotte Smith resigned her power to please,
> Poetic fancy, and poetic ease, etc.

It is instructive to glance for a moment into these forgotten, weed-choked backwaters of literature.

p. 274. **rights of women.** Some of the most thoroughgoing democratic writers were unspeakably shocked at the imputation that their principles led to the female franchise. See Cartwright, *Legislative Rights* (second ed., 1777), pp. 46-7: 'I will beg leave to refer the Dean to the Scriptures, and the other gentleman to the law of nature and the common law of England, and both of them to the fair sex, in order to settle this point. . . . Women know too well what God and nature require of them, to put in so absurd a claim for a share in the rights of election. Their privileges and power are of another kind; and they know their sphere' (an early use of a familiar *cliché*). See for the whole movement W. Lyon Blease, *The Emancipation of English Women* (1910).

p. 275. **Arthur Young.** The *Travels in France* were edited, with an interesting preface, by Miss M. Betham Edwards (ed. 4, 1892); and the *Autobiography* by the same writer (1898).

p. 277, note 1. **Bentham.** The standard but dissatisfying edition of the *Works* is by Sir John Bowring, 11 vols., 1843. The *Life* is by Bowring, the introduction on Bentham's 'Style and Method of Thinking' by John Hill Burton. The letters, with the editor's reminiscences, occupy the last two volumes. Bowring includes some of the authorised *remaniements* by Dumont, retranslated into English (not by Bentham). There are various separate reprints, *e.g.* of the *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1879). Bentham's inimitable *Tables*, referred to *ante*, p. 281, are in Bowring's ed.

p. 277, note 2. **capital punishment.** See *Works*, i. 444 foll.; and Appendix (1830), i. 525, *On Death-punishment*.

p. 277, note 3. **Helvétius.** Story told by Crabb Robinson, *Diary*, i. 195 (ed. 1872).

p. 278, note 1. **woman.** *Works*, i. 355 (*s.v.* 'Marriage').

p. 278, note 2. **Benthamism.** The expository literature is very large; it must suffice to name Stephen, *The Eng. Utilitarians*, vol. i. 1900—an admirable account both of Bentham's life and of his theories and influence; Elie Halévy,

La Formation du Radicalisme philosophique, vol. i., 'La Jeunesse de Bentham'; 1901; vol. ii., 1904. This is a most minute analysis of the antecedents, views, and influence of Bentham, with voluminous *pièces justificatives*. See too C. M. Atkinson, *Jeremy Bentham, his Life and Work*, n.d.—a more recent study, chiefly biographical, and slight on the theoretical side. John Hill Burton's *Benthamiana*, 1843, is a hodge-podge of extracts from Bentham's works; there is room (as Mill implies) for a really good, characteristic, and ordered selection, which would be of value from the literary as well as the speculative point of view. The essay on Bentham (*London and Westm. Review*, 1838), reprinted in John Stuart Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions* (1874), vol. i., written by an escaped but appreciative and judicial Benthamite, in the review that Bentham founded, remains the best summing-up on the subject. See A. V. Dicey, *Law and Public Opinion in England*, 1905, pp. 125-209, for an authoritative picture of Bentham's influence, direct and indirect, on actual legislation and affairs; and the facts he mentions justify Mill's eulogies on Bentham in this field ten times over.

p. 278, note 3. **formula.** For debt to Priestley see note 3 to p. 260 *ante*. Bentham, *Works*, x. 142 (from *Commonplace Book*): 'Priestley was the first (unless it was Beccaria) who taught my lips to pronounce this sacred truth:—That the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation' (see note *ad loc.* on Beccaria's phrase, 'la massima felicità divisa nel maggior numero'). So *Works*, x. 567, 'I was at a fault myself till I stumbled upon "utility"; and this was imperfect till I found "greatest happiness" in Priestley, who did not turn it into a system.' See too *Deontology*, i. 300. The origin of the phrase has been tracked to Hutcheson's *Inquiry into our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Bentham later used the term the 'greatest-happiness principle.'

p. 279. **Fragment on Government.** See ed. by F. C. Montague (1891).

p. 279. **wrote much he did not publish.** See *Report of the Bentham MSS. at University College, London, with a Catalogue*, by Thomas Whittaker (1892); and further examination of the same in Halévy, *La Jeunesse de B.*, notes *passim*, which also include many references to the Bentham MSS. in the British Museum.

p. 280. **Dumont's recasts in French.** *Traités de Législation de M. Jérémie Bentham*, 1802, p. 280. For some of the results see Sir L. Stephen, *The Eng. Utilitarians*, i. 220 foll. Bentham says that over 40,000 copies were sold in Paris for the South American trade alone. He came into relations with American and Spanish legislators, and Stanhope took a copy to Greece of the *Table of the Springs of Action*—a somewhat futile travelling bible, no doubt, in such a place; Byron's opinion of Stanhope and his liberal nostrums is an amusing commentary. Some precise notes on the dealings of Dumont with Bentham's material may be found in Halévy, *op. cit.*, i. 369 foll. (Appendix), with examples. Dumont, it appears, besides selecting, fusing, and smoothing what he found, suppressed some of the more drastic passages; but his great service was to lop the superfluous branches of the Tree of Porphyry, and the needless scholastic subdivisions of the originals.

p. 282, note 1. **Deontology.** Compiled and published by Bowring in 1834, with much ill editing; the work did not give satisfaction (see J. S. Mill's essay).

p. 282, note 2. **human queer old patriarch.** There are many descriptions:

e.g. by Crabb Robinson, *Diary* (ed. 1872), ii. 124-5; by Bowring, in *Works*, vol. xi.; by R. Rush, *Residence at the Court of London* (1833), which gives a most genial impression; and by W. Parry, *Last Days of Lord Byron* (1825); this is an inflated, doubtful production, with a vividly farcical account of Bentham's behaviour in his old age.

p. 283, note 1. **Paley.** The references are to *Works*, ed. Chalmers, 5 vols., 1819: they were first collected in 1805.

p. 283, note 2. **derivative.** See Stephen, *Eng. Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 121 foll. The connection of Paley with the secular English tradition of Locke and Hume on the one side, and with the theological one on the other (especially with Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature*, to which Paley owns his debt), is very clearly shown. See the same work, i. 407 foll., for the theological side of Paley; and Dicey, *Law and Public Opinion in England*, p. 142, on Paley's conservatism.

p. 284, note 1. **'minus a belief in hellfire.'** Stephen, *op. cit.*, ii. 125.

p. 284, note 2. **a curiously qualified optimist.** Paley is humane, and speaks against slavery and duelling (*Works*, i. 172, 198); while his defences of the existing House of Lords (i. 429) and of the laws of capital punishment are sufficiently astonishing, and show the gulf between him and Bentham. He believes that men should be hanged for stealing sheep, but not in all cases; it is more 'useful' that they should be deterred by a severe law which only occasionally makes examples than by a less comprehensive one which works regularly. As to 'optimism,' see *Evidences*, in *Works*, iii. 458 foll. Paley's view of life as a state neither of happiness, nor of misery, nor of punishment, nor of retribution, but of 'moral probation,' is twice worked out (in *Nat. Theology*, *Works*, iv. 411, and in *Sermons*, No. xxxiii., *Works*, v. 438).

p. 285. **enthusiasm.** *Works*, v. 153 foll., sermon 'On Conversion.' For the character of Christ, see *Works*, iii. 303 foll.

p. 286. **James Mill.** See J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, and A. Bain, *James Mill* (1882). The standard edition of the *Analysis* is that with notes and amplifications by J. S. Mill, Bain, Findlater, and Grote. See Stephen, *Eng. Utilitarians*, vol. ii.

p. 287. **Malthus.** It must suffice to refer to J. Bonar, *Malthus and his Work* (1885), and to the memoir by Otter in Malthus's *Principles of Pol. Econ.* (ed. 1836).

p. 289, note 1. **Ricardo.** *Works*, ed. M'Culloch (1846) with memoir; and ed. E C. K. Gonner (1891).

p. 289, note 2. **scornfully denies.** See *Essay on Parliamentary Reform* (posthumously reprinted by M'Culloch, *Works*, p. 551 foll.).

p. 290. **William Cobbett.** The best comprehensive picture, given largely in Cobbett's own words, is *W. C., a Study of his Life*, by E. I. Carlyle, 1904; this supersedes most of E. Smith's *Life*, 2 vols., 1878. The *Rural Rides* have been edited by Pitt Cobbett (1885), and in an abridged ed. by J. Telford, 2 vols. [1910]; the *Advice to Young Men* has often been reprinted. A *Selection* from the political writings by Cobbett's son appeared in 6 vols. in 1835. The *English Grammar* has had many editions. The later, the repentant sketch of Paine, can be found at the end of Moncure Conway's *Life of Paine*.

p. 291. **still disputed reasons.** See E. I. Carlyle, *op. cit.*, Ch. iv.

p. 295. **male and female pedagogues.** Their energies lie mostly outside the

story of literature, though within that of literary society and of the progress of pedagogy. For this reason little or nothing is said in this book of Mrs. Delany, Miss Seward, Mrs. Barbauld ; nor yet of Lord Kames, with his *Loose Hints on Education* (1782), J. Bennet's *Strictures on Female Education* (1788), and the like ; but a full summary of their notions can be seen in W. Lyon Blease, *Emancipation of English Women*, pp. 50 foll. See note to p. 274 *ante*.

p. 297. **Scott's poetry.** The *Poetical Works*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (1904), is a complete edition. There are many earlier ones, from Scott's own (12 vols., 1820) and Lockhart's (12 vols., 1833-4) onwards. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1837-8), the *Journal* (ed. David Douglas, 2 vols. 1890), and the *Familiar Letters* (same editor, 2 vols., 1893), give most of the original material for biography. The Scott literature is very large : amongst separate studies may be named those of R. H. Hutton ('Eng. Men of Letters,' 1878) ; of G. Saintsbury ('Famous Scots' Series, 1897) ; of Walter Bagehot, in *Lit. Studies* (ed. 1898, vol. ii. 'The Waverley Novels,' originally published 1858). A partly hostile account, from the cosmopolitan-radical point of view, will be found in Georg Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature* (Eng. tr., 1905), iv. 102-27. (Scott, we learn (p. 127), is 'an author whom all grown-up people have read, and no grown-up people read.') For Scott's circle see Mrs. MacCunn's *Sir Walter Scott's Friends* (1906). See J. Veitch, *History and Poetry of the Scottish Border* (new ed., 1893), ch. xi., for the ballads.

p. 299. **romancing.** See a good summary by H. A. Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the XIXth Century* (New York, 1902), ch. i. Prof. Beers shows how 'ballads, Gothic romances, Ossianic poetry, the new German literature, the Scandinavian discoveries, . . . all find their focus in Scott.'

p. 301, note 1. **Herd.** See H. Hecht, *Songs from David Herd's MSS.* (Edin., 1904), for a full account of Herd and his circle, as well as of the bibliography of the *Antient and Modern Scotish Songs*, etc., and of the poems borrowed by Scott and Jamieson. In the 1791 ed. there were further changes.

p. 301, note 2. **John Pinkerton.** He confessed to having made the 'second part' of *Hardyknute*, of which he had remarked (*Select Scotish Ballads*, i. xli.) that he was 'indebted for most of the stanzas now recovered to the memory of a lady in Lanarkshire.' *The Death of Menteith*, and *Lord Airth's Complaint*, are among other evident inventions.

p. 302. **The Border Minstrelsy.** Standard ed. by T. F. Henderson (4 vols., 1902) ; a study giving full data for Scott's procedure with his materials. See *e.g.* i. 219, on *Sir Patrick Spens* ; iii. 117, on Pinkerton's forgery ; iii. 148, on *Katharine Janfarie*.

p. 304. **Auld Maitland.** The dispute as to the antiquity and authorship of this piece can be read in *Border Minstrelsy*, ed. Henderson, i. 240-3 ; Lt.-Col. F. Elliot, *Trustworthiness of the Border Ballads*, etc. (1906), and *Further Essays on the Border Ballads* (1910), pp. 219-248 ; and in A. Lang, *Sir W. Scott and the Border Minstrelsy* (1910), pp. 18-53. Mr. Lang, by producing in full Hogg's and Scott's correspondence, and by other evidence, established (if that were needed) Scott's fairness of dealing ; and, in my opinion, disposed of Col. Elliot's suggestion that he 'palmed off on the public' a ballad he knew to be a fabrication. Mr. Lang offered a convincing plea that the ballad came to Hogg in the form in which Hogg passed it on to Scott.

p. 306. **Leyden.** The Kelso ed. of *Poems and Ballads by Dr. John Leyden*

(1875) contains Scott's admiring, amused, and affectionate *Memoir*, first published in the *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 1811, and an anonymous *Supplementary Memoir*, which is flat, but gives many more details, especially about Leyden's work in the East. His longest poem, *Scenes of Infancy*, which celebrates Teviotdale, has pleasant passages in the taste of Goldsmith. Scott also pays him honour not only in some well-known lines in *The Lord of the Isles*, canto iv., but in *St. Ronan's Well*, where Mr. Cargill, who 'knew him well,' calls him 'a lamp too early quenched.'

p. 308. **ballad study . . . during Scott's lifetime.** See the *Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry*, prefixed by him to the 1830 ed. of the *Minstrelsy* (see Henderson, vol. iv. *ad init.*); and Motherwell's 'historical introduction' to his *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* (1827).

p. 309. **bristle with Scots.** See *Lady of the Lake*, note xlix., which gives the version by Jamieson of the Danish original of *Alice Brand*, 'Der ligger en vold i Vester Haf,' in 'the old Scottish idiom'; which is certainly laid on with a trowel, after this manner:

> There liggs a wold in Wester Haf,
> There a husbande means to bigg,
> And thither he carries baith hawk and hound,
> There meaning the winter to ligg.
> (*The wild deer and daes i' the shaw out*).

Scott naturally shunned this kind of thing: but it was a pity he could not drink deeper of the real Danish ballads, instead of the more or less bastard modern German followings with 'romantic' colouring. The *Kjæmpeviser*, from which Jamieson drew, were published in 1591.

p. 310, note 1. **Peter Buchan.** *The Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland* (1828), collected by Buchan with the aid of a 'wight of Homer's craft,' who became somewhat notorious, are praised and accepted as authentic by Scott in his preface to the 1830 ed. of the *Minstrelsy*. Buchan usually spins out and covers up beyond recognition any genuine material that the wight may have brought him, and has a genius for degrading good stories.

p. 310, note 2. **freer march and versification.** See Saintsbury, *Hist. Eng. Prosody*, iii. 77-83, on Scott as a metrist.

p. 313. **He had heard Christabel recited.** See Lockhart, ch. xiii. This was at Lasswade. John Stoddart had the MS. from Allen, Coleridge's friend, and recited it to Scott, who tells of the event in the Introduction (1830) to *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The facts are fully given in the edition of the poem by Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (published for Royal Soc. of Literature, 1907), pp. 44-5, who notes that Southey refers to Scott's imitation in a letter to Wynne of March 5, 1805, and that Scott had also admitted it to Jeffrey; and adds the remark of S. T. C. that 'no insect was ever more like in the colour of its skin and juices to the leaf it fed on than Scott's muse to Scott himself.' This is hardly true of the borrowings in the *Lay*, which are of quite another, and quasi-tropical, colouring. See *post*, ii. 150.

p. 320, note 1. **drama.** For Scott on his own plays, see *Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie* (1854), p. 177. She met Scott in 1816, and he 'was, he said, a proud man, and his pride would never have allowed him to dance attendance on the managers, and consult the varied tastes of actors and others

—or words to that effect.' He had once planned a tragedy, on the Joanna Baillie model, but, had he gone on with it, 'he should have had *no 'ove* in it. His hero should have been the uncle of the heroine, a sort of misanthrope, with only one affection in his heart, love for his niece, like a solitary gleam of sunshine, gilding the dark tower of some ruined and lonely building. Never shall I—never *can* I, forget the fine expression of his lifted eye, as he uttered this!' Long afterwards (*ib.*, p. 339) the admirable lady, then a rigorous Friend, thought it a proof of 'impaired judgment' in Sir Walter that he could 'pen down so many oaths in his diary.'

p. 320, note 2. **James Hogg.** I have used *The Poetical Works of the Ettrick Shepherd* (5 vols., 1838-40). The *Life* by Wilson promised on the title-pages of the first four vols. never came, and on that of the fifth is substituted the words 'with an autobiography.' This includes a memoir by Hogg, somewhat in scraps, and his 'reminiscences' of Scott, Cunningham, Galt, Lockhart, and Sym. The memoir first appeared in 1821, prefixed to *The Mountain Bard* (3rd ed.). There is another collection of the poems (1865-66), which I have not seen. See too the 'Centenary ed.' of *Poems*, by T. Thomson, with *Life* (1874); and *Memorials of Hogg*, by Mrs. Garden (1884-87).

p. 320, note 3. **Blackwood's Magazine.** Hogg states (*Memoir*, p. lxvii) that the magazine was due to his inception; and that he wrote part of the 'Chaldee Manuscript,' which inflamed all Edinburgh, and was promptly withdrawn (p. lxix); and further (p. lxxvi), that the editors 'printed his name in full to poems, letters, and essays which he himself never saw.' The readers, therefore, of the old files must be wary.

p. 324. **a 'golden treasury.'** See that by W. Wallace (1903).

p. 325. **Romance.** See, in Introduction to *The Bridal of Triermain* (1813), 'the author's idea of Romantic Poetry as distinguished from Epic. . . . The former comprehends a fictitious narrative, framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best; which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery. . . . The date may be in a remote age, or in the present; the story may detail the adventures of a prince or peasant.' This is rather negative; see the quotation (*Lady of the Lake*, note xxvi.) from the officer who found it 'romantick' in the Highlanders to wrap themselves in soaked plaids in order to keep warm. For an earlier use of the term, cp. Richard Graves's tale, *The Spiritual Quixote* (1772), bk. vi. ch. ii.: 'A garden . . . was laid out in a romantic taste, with a proper mixture of the *allegro* and the *penseroso*, the cheerful and the gloomy; tufts of roses, jasmines, and the most fragrant flowering shrubs, with a serpentine walk of cypresses and laurels, here and there an urn,' etc.

p. 327. **Lady Louisa Stuart.** See *Familiar Letters* (1894), vol. i. p. 404; also p. 395. Both passages refer to *Old Mortality*, and here as elsewhere Lady Louisa Stuart is the shrewdest critic among Scott's friends. 'It surprises one by not sinking into flatness after the return of Morton from abroad, which was a very slippery place for *you*, who profess never knowing what you are going to write.' She objected to Claverhouse's use of the word 'sentimental': '"sentiment" and "sentimental" were, I believe, first introduced into the language by Sterne, and are hardly as old as I am.' Scott erased the word. See too Lady Louisa's remarks on *Rob Roy*, *Fam. Let.*, ii. 11: 'Beginnings signify little, ends signify more . . . the end of this is huddled.' And on *The*

Heart of Midlothian, *ib.*, ii. 20 : 'You grow tired yourself, want to get rid of the story, and hardly care how.' See also *ib.*, ii. 72, 132, 197, and Mrs. MacCunn, *Sir Walter Scott's Friends*, pp. 205-23.

p. 335, note 1. **Conachar's cowardice.** On this see Lockhart, ch. lxxv. *ad fin.*

p. 335, note 2. **pretences at historical fiction.** See Cross, *Development of the Eng. Novel*, pp. 110-12 for a list, including *Longsword* (1762), James White's *Adventures of John of Gaunt* (1790), and *Earl Strongbow* (1789), etc. These I have failed to see.

p. 341. **W. Bagehot.** *Literary Studies*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-7.

p. 345, note 1. **carelessness in plotting.** See *Journal*, Oct. 18, 1826. 'There is one way to give novelty : to depend for success on the interest of a well-contrived story. But woe's me ! That requires thought, consideration—the writing out a regular plan or plot—above all the adhering to one—which I never can do, for the ideas rise as I write, and bear such a disproportioned extent to that which each occupied at the first concoction, that (cocksnowns !) I shall never be able to take the trouble.'

p. 345, note 2. **anonymous review of the earlier novels.** In *Quart. Rev.*, Jan. 1817 ; reprinted in *Prose Works*, vol. xix. 'His chief characters are never actors, but always acted upon by the spur of circumstances, and have their fates uniformly determined by the agency of the subordinate persons. This arises from the author having usually represented them as foreigners, to whom everything in Scotland is strange.' Other strictures are made on the loose construction of the stories : 'against this slovenly indifference we have already remonstrated.' For the eulogies see *ante*, p. 404.

p. 347. **Adolphus.** The title is : *Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., M.P., containing Critical remarks on the series of Novels beginning with 'Waverley,' and an Attempt to Ascertain their Author* . . . London . . . 1821. John Leycester Adolphus is named by Lockhart, ch. liii., who gives a summary and some extracts ; others are made by W. P. Ker in the art. on Scott in Chambers's *Cyclopedia of Eng. Lit.*, vol. iii. (1902) pp. 32-3. The first letter is dated July 1821 : there was a second edition next year. The book ought to be reprinted for its critical interest, which outlives the occasion. 'My proposal is to identify the author of *Waverley* with the author of *Marmion*,' and this on purely internal evidence : Scott's name is never mentioned. Some of the points of interest are : the authors are both Scotsmen, antiquaries, and sportsmen (Letter II.) ; the novels allude to other contemporaries, but to Scott himself barely or grudgingly (III.) ; 'both, if we mistake not, are lawyers by profession' (III.) ; both show 'address in combining narrative with conversation' (V.), and 'fail in scenes of bold unmitigated villany' ; both write in the 'popular' style (Letter VI. ; see quotation by Ker) ; are fond of colour-effects—'flashes, gleams, glares, sparkles, blazes, sunshine, moonlight, and the reflections of all these things in water and from metals' (VI.) ; have similar openings, and types of hero, and make a like use of soliloquy (VII.), and are 'successful in baffling curiosity and eluding anticipation.' Letter VIII. notes odd likenesses of phrase and diction.

p. 349. **prose.** See A. W. Verrall, *The Prose of Sir Walter Scott*, in *Quart. Rev.* for July 1910 ; the best account of the matter known to me since that of Adolphus. Most of my pages on Scott's style were written before Dr. Verrall's

paper appeared; but as to the quotation from Claverhouse, I have borrowed his method for a moment. His death (1912) is a loss to criticism.

p. 358. **miscellaneous prose.** Besides the 20-vol. ed. of the *Works*, there is the *Misc. Prose of Sir W. Scott* (2 vols., 1841-47), which contains the essays on *Chivalry, Romance, Drama*; the *Lives of the Novelists*, those of *Dryden and Swift*, and most things of importance except the *Napoleon* and *Tales of a Grandfather*.

p. 360. **in France.** See L. Maigron, *Le Roman historique à l'époque romantique* (1908)—an elaborate study.

p. 361. **novelists who appeared after Waverley.** The year 1832 is a somewhat artificial boundary in this chapter, as regards the lesser writers; but the period between *Waverley* and *Sketches by Boz* is a convenient one. For a fuller account of the transitional novelists, see Hugh Walker, *Literature of the Victorian Era* (1910), pp. 612-659. See too Cross, *Development of the Eng. Novel*, pp. 136-7, for lists and examples of Scott's imitators.

p. 362, note 1. **Croly's Salathiel.** The Rev. George Croly was something of a scholar, and a man-of-all-work in letters, producing tragedies, histories, and stories. He is Byron's 'Reverend Rowley Powley,' and in his *Paris in 1815* (1817) he imitates Childe Harold. His Salathiel is the Wandering Jew (Ahasuerus)—whose figure, as we know, long dwelt in the fancy of Shelley. But Salathiel might almost as well be any other Jew. He does not wander much; and he turns patriot and warrior under the early empire, and at last witnesses the fall of Jerusalem. At times there is a kind of likeness to the gorgeous rhythms of De Quincey, as in the picture of the cloud and fire that are magically poised over the Roman host. Croly's poems were collected in two vols. in 1830.

p. 362, note 2. **the petty Scottish novel.** *Mansie Wauch* has often been reprinted, and also Galt's four chief tales. *Annals of the Parish* and *The Ayrshire Legatees* are in 'Everyman's Library'; *The Provost* and *The Entail* in various editions.

p. 363. **enumerated by himself.** See Galt's *Autobiography* (2 vols., 1833), vol. ii. *ad fin.*; and ii. 219-234 for 'Reflections on My Own Work'; and, as to *Annals of the Parish*, ii. 227-8. Some of this matter, and a list, is given in the 'Everyman's Library' edition.

p. 366. **Miss Ferrier.** The novels were not published with the writer's name till 1850, by Bentley, but the secret had long been an open one in her circle and beyond. There are several reprints. The ed. of 1881 contains Miss Ferrier's record of her three visits to Abbotsford, a mixture of kind and sharp observation. For more on this see chap. iv. of the *Memoir and Correspondence of S. E. F.*, written chiefly by her grandnephew, John Ferrier, and edited by J. A. Doyle (1899)—the best commentary on the novels. For the quotation in text on poetic justice, see *Mem. and Corresp.*, p. 75; for the plan of *Marriage*, p. 76; for Miss Clavering's comments on that work, pp. 117-18; and for a judicious comparison by John Ferrier of Miss Ferrier with Miss Austen, Miss Edgeworth, and especially Miss Burney, see pp. 231-3.

p. 369. **Lady Morgan.** Her novels do not seem to have been reprinted lately. Her *Memoirs* (2 vols., 1862), edited by R. Hepworth Dixon and Miss Jewsbury, consist chiefly of letters and diaries. The ragged but useful work by W. J. Fitzpatrick—*Lady Morgan, her Career, Literary and Personal* (1860)—brings

out the amazing virulence of her enemies. But she took only too good care of herself, and retorted with great spirit when silence might have been better.

p. 370. **John Banim.** See the *Life* by P. J. Murray (1857). An anthology of the work of the Banims and Griffin, similar to that made of Carleton's by Mr. W. B. Yeats, would be a boon.

p. 371, note 1. **The Croppy** (1798), by Michael Banim. This has the same mixture of rambling, incredible romance and dramatised history. The 'croppies' are the United Irishmen; the bloody frays in Ross and Wexford are the crises, and the abductions, murders, and arsons are in Banim's grimmest style.

p. 371, note 2. **The Collegians.** For Curran's anecdote, see Lady Morgan's *Memoirs*, ii. 288.

p. 374. **Miss Mitford.** *Our Village* has been often reprinted (*e.g.* in two vols. in 'Bohn's Standard Library,' and in a selection, 1893, with Introduction by Mrs. Richmond Ritchie). Her *Letters* were edited first in three vols., with Life, by A. G. L'Estrange, and then in 1872, in three more vols., by H. Chorley.

p. 376. **Hajji Baba of Ispahan.** Edited, with Introduction, by the Hon. G. Curzon (1895), and several times by other hands.

p. 378. **Trelawny's Adventures of a Younger Son.** Ed. R. Garnett, with introduction (1897).

p. 379. **Peacock.** His *Works* have been edited, though not completely, by E. Cole (3 vols., 1875), with Preface by Lord Houghton and *Life* by Mrs. Clarke, Peacock's granddaughter; his *Letters* and the novels (10 vols., 1891) by E. Garnett; and the novels also, at various dates, by G. Saintsbury: see the same writer's article in his *Essays* (1890). The three plays were published by A. B. Young (1910). See also A. B. Young's dissertation, *The Life and Novels of T. L. P.* (Norwich, 1904); A. Martin Freeman's useful *T. L. P., A Critical Study* (1911); and Carl van Doren, *Life of T. L. P.* (1911), valuable, especially for biography, bibliography, and sources, and congenially written.

p. 384. **Maid Marian.** Peacock works freely upon the Robin Hood story and scenery as told in ballads, good and bad. Once, ch. xv., he invents a ballad-tale which exists nowhere, but which might have existed, and is in perfect keeping; it is told as an anecdote. The rescue of Young Gamwell (who is heard of in Child, *Eng. and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 128) by Little John is an echo of that of Cloudesly in *Adam Bell* (*ib.*, No. 116), and to a less degree from *Robin Hood and the Monk* (No. 119). The "selerer" (cellarer) and the Sheriff of Nottingham play their part severally in *Geste of R. H.*, sts. 233 foll., and st. 205 foll. The theme of the song, 'Oh! bold Robin Hood,' is hinted in Child, No. 147; the lying monk of another excellent song is from *Geste*, sts. 245-250. For Friar Tuck, see Child, Nos. 123, 145. Maid Marian herself is named in Child, No. 150, a late and vulgar ballad, surely depraved from some good old one that is lost. The identification of Marian with Matilda Fitzwater is from Munday's *Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon*, 1597 (Hazlitt-Dodsley, vol. viii.). Here we also find the interruption of Robin's marriage with Marian by outlawry, the rivalry (introduced earlier in the play than in the tale) of Prince John, his resistance by the baron (who, however, is in Munday's hands a poor creature, as Robin is a sentimentalist), and the final solution by King Richard undisguised. Peacock may have read this in Ritson (Van Doren, p. 161).

p. 386. **periodical press after 1800.** See the art. in *Ency. Brit.* (eleventh ed.) by H. R. Tedder, and references therein; Saintsbury, *Nineteenth Century Lit.*

(1896), ch. iv., 'The Development of Periodicals.' Also the 'Centenary' number of the *Edinburgh Review* (Oct. 1902); and W. A. Copinger, *Authorship of the first 100 Nos. of the Ed. Rev.* (*Bibliographiana*, No. 2, Manchester, 1895).

p. 388. **education.** The *Ed. Rev.* provoked, by Sydney Smith's article (the third in No. xxix., Oct. 1809), a sharp retort from Edward Copleston, answered in April 1810 by Smith, Playfair, and Knight (according to Copinger). The *Replies to the Calumnies of the Ed. Rev.* (1810) is a typical and able defence of the Oxford classical education; partially printed in *Memoir of E. Copleston*, by W. J. Copleston (1851), pp. 36 foll.

p. 389, note 1. **Francis Jeffrey.** Lord Cockburn's *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, with selected letters, 2 vols. (1852), Macvey Napier's *Correspondence* (1879), are the chief original authorities; but the most living portraits are in Lockhart's *Peter's Letters*, and in Carlyle's *Reminiscences*.

p. 389, note 2. **articles of Jeffrey**; in 4 vols. (1844), and in 1 vol., 1853. A list of his contributions to the *Review*, so far as he himself could remember them, is given by Cockburn, and is conveniently reprinted in Jeffrey's *Literary Criticism*, ed. D. Nichol Smith (1910). The Introduction by this editor, as well as the selection (fourteen articles), is excellent.

p. 389, note 3. **judicious protests.** See above all Saintsbury, *Hist. of Criticism*, iii. 289-293, and *Essays on Eng. Lit.*, first series, pp. 100-134; also Nichol Smith, *op. cit.*

p. 390, note 1. **ignored Shelley.** The art. in the *Ed. Review*, July 1824, is not by Jeffrey but by Hazlitt. It is not, for him, very critical, but is elegiac and generous, Shelley being pronounced 'with all his faults, a man of genius,' and also 'an honest man.' The conclusion, with its slap at the Quarterly Reviewer of Keats ('the shaft, venal, vulgar, venomous'), would have pleased Shelley better.

p. 390, note 2. **retrospect written in 1829.** *Ed. Rev.*, No. xcix. The article is on Mrs. Hemans, and contains an amusing account of what Jeffrey thought the province of 'female poetry.'

p. 391, note 1. **Keats . . . he had praised.** *Ed. Rev.*, Aug. 1820 (No. lxvii.): 'his works . . . are so coloured and bestrewn with the flowers of poetry, that even while perplexed and bewildered in their labyrinths, it is impossible to resist the intoxication of their sweetness, or to shut our hearts to the enchantments they so lavishly present.' *Endymion*, moreover, 'is at least as full of genius as of absurdity'; and, finally, 'Mr. Keats has unquestionably a very beautiful imagination, a perfect ear for harmony, and a great familiarity with the finest diction of English poetry; but he must learn not to misuse or misapply,' etc., etc. This represents, probably, Jeffrey's furthest reach of sympathy with the romantic poetry in its prime; and he went further in sympathy than Macaulay or Carlyle.

p. 391, note 2. **reviews of Wordsworth.** See, in chief, April 1808 (No. xxiii.) (contrast with Crabbe at expense of W.); Nov. 1814, No. xlvii. (*Excursion*); Oct. 1815, No. l. (*White Doe of Rylstone*—the nadir of Jeffrey's commentaries on poetry); in Jan. 1812 (No. xxxviii.), on Wilson's *Isle of Palms*; a review not saved by Jeffrey for his selection, but containing his real mind on Wordsworth, after he has vented his railings: 'We do not want Mr. Wordsworth to write like Pope or Prior, nor to dedicate his Muse to subjects which he does not himself think interesting; we are prepared, on the contrary, to listen with far deeper delight to the songs of his mountain solitude, and to gaze on his mellow

pictures of simple happiness and affection, and his lofty sketching of human worth and energy; and we only beg that we may have these nobler elements of his poetry without the debasement of childish language, mean incidents, and incongruous images.' This patrician contempt for 'mean' life is evilly shown in the scornful notice of the unlucky Thomas Dermody, April 1806 (No. xv.).

p. 391, note 3. **on 'Beauty' in the Britannica.** In the supplement (1824) to the fourth (and fifth and sixth) editions; enlarged from art. on Alison's *Principles of Taste* in *Ed. Rev.*, May 1811 (No. xxxv.). This tractate heads Jeffrey's selection, and tells much of his temperament.

p. 392, note 1. **Cottagers of Glenburnie.** July 1808 (No. xxiv.: not in his Selections).

p. 392, note 2. **Barry Cornwall.** In review of *A Sicilian Romance*, Jan. 1820 (No. lxv.).

p. 393, note 1. **Advice to a Young Reviewer.** In the *Memoir* of E. Copleston (1851), pp. 289 foll., the *Advice* is quoted in full. Reprinted in Arber's 'English Garner': *Critical Essays and Lit. Fragments*, re-ed. J. C. Collins (1903), pp. 149-166. Collins, pp. xxii-xxiii, corrects Whately's statement (*Remin. of E. Copleston*, p. 6) that the skit is upon a particular review in *The British Critic*. It is clearly meant for any one whom the cap fits, Jeffrey in especial.

p. 393, note 2. **loved the Elizabethans much more.** See the art. on Ford, Aug. 1811 (No. xxxvi.), for the proof. The survey of English literary history, though brief, is most characteristic and clear, and no one after reading it could ever again call Jeffrey a classicist. See too extract by Nichol Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-30, from the art. on Scott's *Swift*, Sept. 1816 (No. liii.)—a still sharper statement of his attitude; also art. on Campbell's *Specimens*, March 1819 (No. lxii.). Jeffrey perhaps coined the phrase 'an age of reason' for the age of Anne. Mr. Nichol Smith also refers to a similar utterance in a very late art. on Atherstone's *Fall of Nineveh*, in Sept. 1828 (No. xcv.): 'The present age, we think, has a hundred times more poetry, and more true taste for poetry, than that which immediately preceded it, and of which, reckoning its duration from the extinction of the last of Queen Anne's wits down to about thirty odd years ago [this makes the revival begin in the *nineties*], we take leave to say that it was, beyond all dispute, the most unpoetical age in the annals of this or any other considerable nation.'

p. 394. **Brougham.** The *Works and Speeches*, in 11 vols. (1855, etc.), contain only a selection, revised by Brougham himself, of his innumerable writings. The *Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham, Written by Himself* (3 vols., 1871), contains many inaccuracies. The most vivid sketches of Brougham are those by Henry Reeve in the *Ency. Brit.* (ninth ed., utilised and corrected in eleventh ed.), and by Walter Bagehot in *Biographical Studies* (1881).

p. 396, note 1. **Horner.** Publicist, economist, and co-founder of the *Ed. Rev.*; for list of his articles see *s.v.* in *D. N. B.*

p. 396, note 2. **Sydney Smith.** The *Works* were published in 3 vols., 1848; the references below are to the one-vol. ed. of 1869. The *Memoirs of Sydney Smith*, by Lady Holland, his daughter, are the main authority; but there are endless allusions in the literature of the time. Amongst modern studies see Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, 'The Edinburgh Reviewers'; and A. Chevrillon, *S. S. et la Renaissance des Idées libérales en Angleterre au xix^e siècle*, 1894.

p. 396, note 3. **Lewis.** *Works*, p. 17 (*Ed. Rev.*, 1803). *Anastasius*, see *Works*, pp. 365 foll. (*Ed. Rev.*, 1821).

p. 398, note 1. **Book of Fallacies.** *Works*, pp. 498-9 (*Ed. Rev.*, 1825).

p. 398, note 2. **Methodists.** *Ed. Rev.*, 1808; *Works*, pp. 97 foll. All varieties of Methodist are treated as 'in one general conspiracy against common sense and rational orthodox Christianity.' The strangest trait of this 'set of beings' is their belief in providential 'interferences,' of which grotesque examples are recited at length. But 'the doctrine of the immediate and perpetual interference of Divine Providence is not true.' The longer passage cited in the text is from the review of Hannah More's *Works*, *Ed. Rev.*, 1809; *Works*, p. 167.

p. 400. **Character of Mackintosh.** *Works*, pp. 765-8; of Horner, *ib.*, pp. 785-7.

p. 401. **Quarterly Review.** See 'Centenary' numbers of *Q. R.*, April and July 1909, for much information as to origins, contributors, authorship, etc.

p. 401, note 2. **Croker.** See *The Croker Papers* (1884, 3 vols.), ed. L. J. Jennings; and the defence of his character in *Q. R.*, April 1909.

p. 405, note 1. **Blackwood's.** See *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons . . .* (1897-8, 3 vols.) by Mrs. Oliphant and Mrs. Gerald Porter; Lockhart, *Peter's Letters*; and A. Lang, *Life of J. G. Lockhart* (2 vols., 1897), vol. i. *passim*—a minute and judicial narrative.

p. 405, note 2. **notorious performances.** See above all Lang's *Lockhart*, i. 121-162. The 'Chaldee manuscript,' withdrawn after the first edition of the number in October 1817, was compounded by Lockhart and Wilson, at the suggestion of Hogg, and with the aid of Blackwood; its personalities set Edinburgh by the ears; its worst feature was a wanton attack on Professor Playfair, duly deplored in *Peter's Letters*, ii. 217 (third ed., 1819). That on Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was not by Lockhart (Lang, i. 148, note—Mr. Lang vouches for this on evidence privately known to him), and is blamed and also pronounced inexplicable by Lockhart (*Peter's Letters*, ii. 218). The bespattering of Keats, which is incidental to that of the 'Cockney School' generally and Leigh Hunt in especial, is of untraced authorship. Lockhart (*Peter's Letters*, ii. 221-4) still curses the Cockneys without measure, not, however, naming Keats. He partly relented later, but remained cold (Lang, i. 203, 246); yet long after, in 1840-41, seems to have urged republishing Keats's poems as if 'willing to repair an injustice' (Lang, ii. 401, letter quoted from Dean Boyle, who cites this from Lockhart's own conversation). So long a note may be excused, as errors are still repeated, and the character of Lockhart, at bottom not only generous but dwelling in *templa serena* above these coils, is concerned. It should be added that Mr. Lang wipes out the long-lingering suggestion that Lockhart was encouraged or aided in his escapades by Scott; who did his best to divert him from them.

p. 406. **John Wilson.** The twelve vols. of *Works* edited by W. J. Ferrier (1855-8) are a selection, the *Noctes* filling four vols., the *Recreations of Christopher North* four, the *Essays* two, the *Tales* one, and the *Poems* one. A list of most of his writings in *Blackwood's* is given at the end of the *Memoir* by his daughter, Mrs. Gordon (1862). The papers on Spenser, the *Specimens* of the *British Critics*, and *Dies Boreales* are not in Ferrier's edition, but contain

notable and characteristic things: see Saintsbury, *Hist. of Criticism*, iii. 472-7, for an account of these and of Wilson as a critic generally.

p. 407. **De Quincey.** Letter quoted in *Memoir of Wilson*, ii. 153 foll.

p. 409. **An Hour's Talk.** In *Recreations of C. N.*, i. 287 foll.

p. 409, note 2. **Lockhart.** See Lang, *op. cit.* The *Spanish Ballads* have been often reissued. For a close criticism of Lockhart's choice of poems, and corrections of his statements, see J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly, *Chapters on Spanish Literature* (1908), pp. 77-119 (*The Romancero*).

p. 415. **Maginn.** See his *Miscellanies, Prose and Verse*, ed. R. W. Montagu (2 vols., 1885), a selection with memoir. Two of the *Homeric Ballads* are included; and many ditties, parodies, tales, and essays.

p. 416, note 1. **The Westminster Review.** See J. S. Mill, *Autobiography* (1873); and Stephen, *English Utilitarians.*

p. 416, note 2. **articles (by James Mill).** In No. 1 (Jan. 1824), No. 2 (April 1824), No. 7 (July 1825; the extract given is from the last-named, vol. iv. p. 197). For a typical anti-Tory article, see that on Southey's *Book of the Church* (Jan. 1825).

p. 418. **Ugo Foscolo.** See the exhaustive study by Francesco Viglione, *Ugo Foscolo in Inghilterra* (Catania, 1910), and bibliography, *ib.*, pp. 319-21.

p. 419, note 1. **Henry Headley.** The 1810 edition of the *Selections* has a memoir by H. Kett, which gives a charming study of this young undergraduate of Trinity, Cambridge. Headley also wrote in the *Gent. Mag.*, and projected an edition of Southwell—a plan carried out long after by Dr. Grosart. His extracts from and appreciation of Drayton were overlooked in my *Michael Drayton* (1905), and are most judicious. 'The *greatness of his heart*,' says Headley, 'seems to have produced in him that *confused kind of honest indignation* which deprived him of the power of discrimination'—a Lamb-like touch.

p. 419, note 2. **The Retrospective Review.** See Saintsbury, *Hist. of Criticism*, iii. 283-6, for an appreciative description of its scope and doings.

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p. 207 (additional note, see p. 436 *ante*). *The Episodes of Vathek.* This work, which has appeared since the above was printed, contains the French text of the stories of *Prince Alasi*, *Prince Barkiarokh*, and *Princess Zulkäis*, with an English translation by the late Sir Frank T. Marzials, and introduction by Mr. Lewis Melville.

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